

disques

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disques

FOR APRIL 1932

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VOL. III

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No. 2

ON March 31 the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Franz Joseph Haydn will be observed throughout the world, or at least throughout that portion of it which now and then gives ear to good music. In the two hundred years that have elapsed since Haydn first set eyes on the somewhat troubled light of day a great deal has happened, and especially in the art to which he so assiduously devoted himself. There is a vast difference, of course, between a Haydn quartet and a work for a similar group of instruments by a modern composer or a Haydn symphony and a modern symphony. But somehow these differences, though immeasurably wide, have not yet become marked enough to put the Haydn work out of the running; it hasn't yet been proved to the entire satisfaction of all music lovers that the superior and far more abundant resources available to modern composers have been utilized sufficiently well as to dispose altogether of the composer whose bicentennial will occur in a couple of days. Haydn even in 1932 has apposite and significant things to say. Written years ago, before such giants as Beethoven and Wagner made sweeping changes in the course of music, his works still exert a wide and profound appeal, and a world

without some of the best of them would for many of us be quite inconceivable. "Haydn will never elate, thrill, astonish, or cause one to think very deeply, like Bach's 'Sanctus' or Beethoven's 'Agnus Dei' or the closing scene of *Götterdämmerung*," says D. G. A. Fox in his little volume on Haydn in the Musical Pilgrim series, "but, provided we are correctly 'tuned in,' he can be more consistently refreshing and salutary than any other great composer—and he will very rarely let us down."

Apparently the phonograph companies, discouraged with the response to the rather lavish preparations some of them made for the recent Beethoven and Schubert centennials, are going to ignore the Haydn bicentennial. At least such are the present indications. There has been only one major Haydn recording on the lists during recent months—an indifferent performance of the *Quinten* Quartet, —and the current supplements reveal none whatever, with the exception of a little *Minuetto* played by Pablo Casals, which in all probability was not issued with any intention of observing the bicentennial, and in any case can hardly be designated as a major recording.

One wonders if an opportunity—perhaps a minor one, but nevertheless

an opportunity—hasn't here been missed, or at least will be missed if no Haydn recordings are issued sometime this year. One will readily grant that in times like these it would be folly to attempt anything on the same grand scale as that on which the Beethoven and Schubert centennials were celebrated, but surely we might at least have a couple of the string quartets and several of the symphonies. Haydn wrote over a hundred symphonies, nearly a hundred string quartets, and thirty-one concertos, not to mention a vast amount of other instrumental and vocal music. Of his symphonies, only five have been recorded; of his quartets, hardly a dozen; and of his concertos, but one. This is scarcely a very handsome representation. It is by no means adequate. In fact, it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that Haydn has been neglected.



If the catalogues listed an abundant supply of Haydn recordings, there would be no reason for these remarks, bicentennial or no bicentennial; but now that the electrical process of recording has been in use for some years it seems absurd that a composer of Haydn's importance and appeal isn't better represented on discs. Now, with the bicentennial upon us, the shortage of Haydn discs becomes painfully glaring. Elsewhere in this issue—at the conclusion of Mr. Powell's article on the composer—is printed a list of available Haydn recordings, and only a glance at it is sufficient to convince even the most skeptical that it should be much longer than it is. What makes the relatively small number of Haydn recordings particularly surprising is the fact that this composer's works are admirably adapted for recording purposes and that they can be recorded with comparatively little expense. Moreover, needing no extensive publicity, they do not represent much of a commercial risk; anyone at all interested in music knows of Haydn and does not need to be told that he ought to have some of the recorded symphonies and quartets in his library. Naturally, to secure Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra or Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony to record a Haydn symphony is an expensive business, and perhaps in these dull times such a venture might involve considerable financial loss. But after all there are other orchestras which could record the symphonies satisfactorily, and without so great an outlay of money. The Victor Symphony Orchestra, for example, is a competent group of instrumentalists, and its discs are always well recorded. A couple of Haydn symphonies played by the Victor Symphony ought to be pretty sure of a brisk sale. And in Europe, where the cost of recording is said to be less formidable than it is over here, the Philharmonic Orchestras of Berlin and Vienna and the orchestra of the Berlin State Opera ought surely to have recorded more Haydn symphonies than they have.

As for the string quartets, the problem is even simpler. It would not be at all difficult to obtain plenty of capable quartets to record some of these works. Here the expense would obviously be very small. If we can't have the Léners or the now defunct Flonzaleys, then there are other organizations which, though not so well known as and perhaps inferior in some respects to these ensembles, are nevertheless quite capable of performing Haydn's quartets in a highly acceptable manner.

Haydn's distinguished contemporary, Mozart, has been treated especially well by the recorders during the past year or so. Mozart, Bach, Beethoven and Wagner,

according to the index to Volume II of *Disques*, were the most frequently recorded composers during the past twelve months, easily surpassing even such favorites as Brahms, Chopin and Tschaikowsky. And the Mozart recordings, it should be noted, were in many cases of works that had not previously appeared on discs. Quite a few of them, indeed, were works seldom if ever heard elsewhere.

But the only new Haydn recordings issued during the same period were an *Eighteenth Century Dance* played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, the *Toy Symphony* played by an orchestra conducted by Felix Weingartner, and the Quartet in D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2, played by the Poltronieri String Quartet. And the year before, one may discover by consulting the index to Volume I of *Disques*, things were pretty much the same. Mozart, Bach, Beethoven and Wagner again stood at the head of the composers' list, though they were rather closely pressed by Brahms, Tschaikowsky and Chopin. More recordings of all composers, of course, were issued during that year than during the one just closed; it was, indeed, perhaps the greatest year—so far as sheer quantity is concerned, and maybe from the standpoint of quality, too—in the history of the phonograph. Yet during that same year the only Haydn recordings that appeared were a couple of selections from the *Creation*, two string quartets, a piano sonata, a harpsichord sonata, a single song, and the Symphony No. 13 in G Major.



However, if the list of Haydn recordings is not a satisfactorily long one, it nonetheless contains some highly desirable items, several of which rank with the finest achievements of the recorders. The *Clock Symphony* played by Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, the *Surprise Symphony* played by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony, the Symphony No. 13 in G Major played by Krauss and the Vienna Philharmonic, a couple of the string quartets (it is too bad, incidentally, that the admirable Edison recording of the Quartet in C, Op. 33, No. 3, played by the Roth String Quartet, which was considered by many to be the finest string quartet recording ever issued, is no longer available), and the Trio in G Major played by Cortot, Thibaud and Casals—any of these recordings can be safely and enthusiastically recommended. The last named in particular is a wholly delightful performance.



These form a solid foundation on which the companies could build an imposing array of recordings and an enduring tribute to Haydn's genius. Haydn is not being neglected in the concert hall this season. His works are appearing on the programs of all the large symphony orchestras. And best of all they are not being worked to death. The conductors, for once exercising a little originality, have avoided the familiar works and played, instead, some of the less well known symphonies. Considering that this is Haydn's bicentennial year, that he has not thus far been treated any too generously, and, finally, that this is a period during which the strictest economy must be observed—considering these things, then, the recorders could scarcely hit on a more logical choice for exploration than Haydn, nor, moreover, on a more fruitful and rewarding one.

The number of those artists who have refused to record because of a belief that the phonograph is not yet capable of doing justice to their interpretations has steadily diminished in recent years. Conspicuous among the small band of artists who have steadfastly held out against the invitations of the recording companies was Arthur Schnabel, the great German-Czechoslovakian pianist—and now he, too, has succumbed. According to the current issue of the *Gramophone*, he has been secured to record all the Beethoven piano sonatas and the five piano concertos for the Beethoven Sonata Society. This obviously is an announcement of more than ordinary importance, and incidentally it demonstrates that H.M.V., the company sponsoring the Beethoven Society, is determined to give the subscribers the very finest interpretations available. Schnabel, in the opinion of many qualified judges, is unsurpassed as an interpreter of Beethoven's pianoforte music. A more satisfactory choice could hardly have been made.



Beginning with this month, reviews of the new sheet music will become a regular feature of *Disques*. This department—to be called New Music—will be in the hands of Mr. Maurice B. Katz, whose article on Schönberg in the January issue will be remembered.



Among the articles scheduled for early publication in *Disques* are:

"The Songs of Charles Tomlinson Griffes," by *William Treat Upton*.

"Aaron Copland," by *Isaac Goldberg*.

"Ernest Bloch," by *David Ewen*.

"Richard Strauss," by *Laurence Powell*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, CH-Christschall, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotipia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

Absolute Music: Does It Exist?

By ISAAC GOLDBERG

The vocabulary of criticism is peppered with distinctions that do not distinguish. We speak glibly, from student days, of "classical" and "romantic," whether in letters, art or music; our text-books are parcelled off into "periods," as if poets, painters and composers had their being and brought forth their works for the convenience of the historian's rubrics; "objective" and "subjective" are employed as if a sort of Rio Grande divided them into North and South; "physiologic" and "psychologic," "body" and "mind" appear equally amenable to neat partition. That such divisions have their uses, it is true; just as, for example, the scaffolding before a façade has its uses until the structure is well on its way toward completion. It is not so evident to many, however, that perhaps like the scaffolding these terms should be dismantled after the building is up. In other words, they serve subtly to implant a sense of separateness and even disunity where, in truth, a human unity exists.

This terminology, no doubt, is dictated by the necessities of analysis. It is a question, however, whether it should not be scrapped when we have attained a thoroughly synthesized grasp of the particular subject. Or, if not scrapped, at least definitely subordinated. Critics in general are more skilled in taking things apart than in putting them together. They more quickly discern parts than reestablish wholes. So that, quite naturally, the technique and the vocabulary of analysis are more highly developed than the technique and the vocabulary of synthesis. Indeed, most of us, when we think of critics at all, think of them solely as analytic minds. We speak of So-and-so as a fine analyst; when do we mention Such-and-such as a great synthesist?

To get down to our particular case, there is the question of absolute music, as opposed and contrasted to program music. The more I have thought of this supposed antithesis, the more I have come to believe that we are not dealing with opposites at all. We have, as so often, been befuddled by words, by facile terms. A more or less arbitrary distinction that may have its uses in analytical discussion has been carried over into the pleasure of music—as distinguished from the study of music—and created the illusion of an impenetrable wall where, in reality, only a scaffolding exists.

Absolute music is supposed to be music that is self-dependent; for its effect it relies upon itself alone; it is, in a phrase, music *an sich*. Program music, on the other hand, is not a self-dependent entity; to achieve its effect it steps outside the bounds of music, enlisting the aid of description. That description may be the text of a poem, the words of a song, the scenery of an opera, the annotations of the composer or the imaginative description of the program editor.

We have, in painting, an analogous distinction between color used for itself alone, and color used as a descriptive report, an identifiable representation of a scene or an object. This descriptive use of color is frowned upon by the sterner critics of art; it stands, they maintain, for the obtrusion of irrelevant emotion. At the other extreme we have so determined an exclusion of this emotional refer-

ence that the painting achieves what some are pleased to call mathematics; others prefer to call it desiccation.

What are the facts, as we experience them before the music?

It is simple enough to dismiss mere tonal mimicry. Nobody would seriously pretend that imitations of birds and spinning-wheels and locomotives were music. Yet even here we must be careful. Consider what Wagner has done with bird-suggestions in the forest music of *Siegfried*; spinning wheels hum right through good music, whether—to take the first examples that come to mind—in Saint-Saëns' *Le Rouet d'Omphale*, the chorus of women in Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*, the solo of Phoebe that opens Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard*, or Schubert's setting of Gretchen's familiar song in *Faust*; as for locomotives, Honegger's *Pacific*, 231 still runs on schedule time, and takes on plenty of symphonic passengers.

The truth is that we must pay little or no attention to what composers say about their music,—to the programs that, carefully or carelessly, they offer in explanation of their scores. Such explanations have a certain commentative validity; they give us an insight into the way the mind of the composer works,—what starts him off or acts as stimulation. It is easily conceivable that a man may write a masterpiece around a wretched program, or conversely, that around the most inspiring program he may write a most bathetic screed. The music is not in the description; strangely enough, it is in the music.

From this it follows that we are frequently in danger of underestimating the purely musical qualities of music that traffics with description. Tchaikowsky is a case in point. He may print no programs for his symphonies, yet—and we should keep this in mind for later application—they clearly tell the story of his wracked Russian soul. To some temperaments they appear to be a series of undignified, at times hysterical, self-exposures. And these selfsame temperaments easily become self-deafened to the more abstract beauties of the writing that those symphonies contain. One cannot like everything; even men and women afflicted with satyriasis and nymphomania reveal preferences for some type of female or male. It is true, however, that too many undisciplined listeners allow the program of the music, whether stated or implied, to get in the way of their listening.

The situation is almost paradoxical, yet it is decidedly worth clarifying.

On the one hand we have the listener who, delighted with the story and the non-musical associations, enjoys the composition not so much for itself as for its service in illustrating tonally that story and those associations. There are people who go to Wagnerian music dramas—I never believed it until I met them—for the drama rather than for the music. What is more, they would have received a good measure of support from Wagner himself; he did not regard his music as an independent entity. On the other hand we have the listener who insists that programs do not count,—that music, from its very nature, can be music and nothing else. Yet we discover that the first group, through its non-musical interests, is led to deeper attention to the music; while the second group, through its aversion to obtrusive, non-musical elements, is betrayed into slighting the music itself.

I have found this true time and again of the Tschaikowsky symphonies; even—perhaps especially—in my own evolution as a listener. I am now satisfied that this Russian is an appreciably greater composer than many fine musicians give him credit for being,—that in the treatment of his material, in the employment of his instruments, in solo and in combination, his essential musicality is of a high order. The program, we agreed, has nothing to do with the appreciation of the music as music; but—and this we forget—if we do not allow a good program to cheat us into accepting inferior compositions, neither should we permit a bad one, or any one at all, to prevent us from going to the core of the music itself. The simplest and the most sensible course is to ignore the program. It may be interesting to read it, as it is interesting to read that a composer is over-fond of pickles, or women, or that he hates silk underwear. But once the music begins to play, only the music counts.

Yet this does not dispose of the main question. Does really absolute music exist?

II

One thinks naturally of the so-called mathematical music of the Bach fugal type. This, we were brought up to believe, is absolute, in contradistinction to the programmatic type, explicit or implied, of the Romantics. Classical music—so runs the cliché—is distinguished by its adherence to the formal element. The modernists with their cult of abstraction are supposed to represent a return to absolute music. But is the matter so simple? That the modernists are exclusively cultivators of absolute music one is very free to question. Stravinsky's music often reeks with program, even when, to desensualize his work, he banishes the violins and violas from his orchestra; so does much of the music of Prokofieff. Honegger sets locomotives and rugby games to music. Berg selects, for the most modernist of operatic experiments, a century-old drama by Büchner, *Wozzeck*. The modernist, in a word, for all his flights into abstraction, cannot escape emotion. Having flattered himself that he had denied the root of all art, he discovers that subtly it has grown over him and entangled him. What is more, the modernist is by no means formless. He is simply engaged by a different type of form from that of the classicist. He, too, has design and pattern; and the recognition of, the pleasure in, pattern is an emotional tonic.

Back, for a few moments, to Bach, and to what he is supposed to stand for. That Bach was an unemotional absolutist in music, besides being a libel upon his character, is an untruth. Nor do I refer to his Mass, his Passion, his cantatas. I mean his rigorous fugal compositions. They are filled with excitement, now held in hand, now unleashed. The very name *fugue* (Latin, *fuga*, flight) reveals how naturally, even in seeking a name for the least programmatic of music, we have recourse to a vivid combination of description and emotion. To say, as some not inconsiderable critics have said, that the æsthetic emotion has no relation to the human emotions as we experience them daily is fatuous. Is it necessary, in order to achieve the proper attitude toward art, to separate it from the very emotions in which it is sourced? Is it really possible, even in the most determined modernist painting, to dissociate color from its connotations in our everyday lives? To achieve, in more technical language, absolute presentation as opposed to that representation which lesser spirits fear in painting even as lesser musicians (in the illu-

sion of their superiority) fear frank melody in music? Distortion in modernist art may be a step away from realism; it may affect to be preoccupied with a cold unfeeling entity sometimes called "significant form." Nevertheless its effect, when successful, is undoubtedly psychological and emotional, comparable to that of polytonality and atonality in music.

The associations of our common experience are too great to permit of absolute abstraction. Even when, supposedly, we are delighting in the virtuosity of color for color's sake, and doing our best—if we are fanatical modernists—not to detect in a painting any resemblance to a recognizable model in life or nature—we nevertheless are drawing upon vital, primal associations. The arts cannot exist in a vacuum. The consecrated musical terminology is laden with such associations. Composers who, bent upon the utmost abstraction, label their movements simply *allegro*, *maestoso*, *vivace*, *andante*, *scherzo*, are using descriptive, quasi-programmatic words that come directly out of commonplace life,—words that mean happy, majestic, lively, at a walking pace, in jest.

III

Music, then, the least representational of the arts, yet cannot escape its measure of representation. As I have hinted above, the dissonances of the ultra-modernists, far from removing the art from emotionality, really add emotion. The history of dissonance in music, indeed, is associated with the evolution of the increased power of music to express feeling.

What then? Do these various considerations mean that we are to abandon the field to those simpler souls who look to music, as to all the other arts, for stories and homilies? I think not. They do mean, however, that the distinction between absolute and program music needs a revaluation,—that the conception of absolute music as pure design, unpolluted by emotion, is altogether too schematic,—that here, as in so many other provinces of life, we are dealing, not with two sharply demarcated entities, not with a case of *either this or that*, but with a sort of musical spectrum, as it were, in which the colors very gradually blend into and grow out of each other.

Yet behind the fallacy of the sharp division of music into non-emotional, non-descriptive absolute and emotional, descriptive program, as behind so many fallacies, there is a core of truth. Music is essentially presentational, not representational; if it deals, as do all the arts, primarily with emotion, that emotion is an intellectualized emotion. It is abstracted from the specific circumstances that cause exalted feeling. Music is not—any more than is art—under the necessity of describing those circumstances in recognizable, photographic detail. It is not by nature factual.

The further music recedes from this obvious realism, the closer it approaches to what has been called absolute music. Here the emotion is purified of special circumstance and acquires the illusory—for it is illusory—aspect of eternity. To say that modernist music lacks emotion is not exact. Musical modernism simply gets excited over different things from those that excited the classicists (oh, yes, the classicists got excited!) and the romantics.

In a word, absolute music, like so many other things in this world of Einsteinian physics, turns out to be relative.

Haydn the Human

By LAURENCE POWELL

Haydn is fast becoming one of those great men of the past who are labeled and pigeon-holed as a consequence of the incessantly repeated blind unthinking dicta of pedants and pedagogues: Haydn is fast becoming a tradition, with the result that as Time moves forward his work is becoming more and more misrepresented. Each generation or perhaps, since the growth of music is so rapid, each decade should produce an active transvaluation of the work of every "immortal" composer of the past. When we say that this or that composer is immortal, what we really mean is that his music will *live* till Time is done, and when we talk about music *living*, we mean that it grows and even changes in certain aspects, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse according to the wear and tear of circumstance. In a period of hyperemotional efflorescence Haydn's music will appear mathematical, but nevertheless will hold its own and not suffer complete eclipse: in a period of mathematical aberration, akin to that in evidence in modern Germany, Haydn's music will seem to be fraught with poetry. But judging by most of the literature on Haydn he has been filed away and marked "immortal" and finally accepted as a static immobile force. The startling incongruity of a fusion of "immortality" and "immobility" only serves to indicate what pranks the endlessly repeated formulæ of the pedants can play with active art criticism.

When Haydn put his pen down for the last time, his work was by no means finished: it did not even exist for the greater majority of his hearers, because the vastest part of his audience was as yet unborn, and on the other hand his work will exist exactly as many times as there will be pairs of ears to hear it. At the death of Haydn the diamond was cut, true, and finally cut, but it had only been seen in one particular hue of light, and possibly only one facet of it at that. It was for future generations to turn the stone round so that the particular light of their own day might show up the beauty of other facets. Haydn's diamond seems to have got stuck and the same old clichés are reiterated as to the merits of the particular facet that faces the bleary eyes of pedantry.

It is time we gave his diamond a flip and turned it over, so that we may possibly come to regard Haydn as something more than a pioneer, who was "the father of the symphony," and who did more than play second fiddle to Mozart, and who was decidedly more than a garrulous Eighteenth Century wag who wrote an *Ox Minuet*, a *Razor Quartet* and sundry other quartets used now as traditional curtain raisers to chamber music concerts, and divers and sundry symphonies, notably those entitled *Toy*, *Farewell* and *Surprise*, all of this music being imbued with grace and elegance but singularly devoid of any human expression. However, judging by the innings that Beethoven and Schubert enjoyed during their death centennial celebrations, the bicentennial of his birth will no doubt stir up something on Haydn's behalf, and probably end up by whirling his diamond round at such a ferocious pace that by the end of 1932 we shall not be able to see a single facet of it but only a confused glitter that might result from a piece of cut glass from Woolworth's.

It is exaggeration to say that Haydn was a pioneer, because far from being a

revolutionary or ultra-modern in his day, he worked in the conventional newer forms of his day, although, very true, he enlarged upon them to his own satisfaction: had he not done so his name would have meant no more to us today than do the names of his countless contemporaries who worked in the same conventional forms. How can Haydn possibly be "the father of the symphony" when one considers the Mannheim group of symphonists, who, though more or less contemporary with Haydn's early Esterhazy years, had in all probability at that time never so much as even heard of Haydn, and yet who wrote barrels of symphonies? Stamitz wrote nearly fifty symphonies before he died in 1757, two years before Haydn wrote his first symphony. Secular instrumental music as opposed to ecclesiastical instrumental music, the harmonic concept as opposed to the polyphonic concept had, of course, taken root well and thoroughly in Italy at least seventy years before Haydn saw the light of day. And had it not been for the recrudescence of the contrapuntal idiom in Germany, where after the Italians had abandoned vocal polyphony in favor of the harmonic concept, the Germans had discovered a new use for counterpoint in the medium of instruments, the symphony would have ripened before Haydn's time. The harmonic concept was shelved for a time, until J. S. Bach had had his mighty say, and in the finality of it, had forced his sons to go to the attic and dig out the dusty toy of the past, the harmonic idiom. It was Philip Emmanuel Bach who seems to have derived most pleasure from this toy, and it was the fruit of his pleasure that deposited its seed in Haydn. J. S. Bach's instrumental music, such as the concertos, may appear to be thoroughly secular; nevertheless it is ecclesiastical in that it has its roots in the polyphonic idiom which was developed in and by the Church. The difference between Bach's instrumental music and that of Haydn may be summed up by saying that while Bach's music grew up in church, Haydn's developed at the dinner parties of the Esterhazys. Bach wrote always for the glory of God, and so did Haydn with his "Laus Deo" at the head of his manuscripts, but Bach was paid to give glory to the Almighty while Haydn was paid to delight Count Esterhazy and grace his dinner table.

II

The situation facing Haydn when, fired from the choir of St. Stephen's Church, he was forced to fend for himself would be something akin to what would face a young genius in like predicament in 1932. He would, as a budding composer, read a welter of experimental music that had already been accepted as masterpieces by the bluestockings: he would ponder Schönberg's atonalism, be amused at Stravinsky's restlessness, disturbed by Krenek's abortive attempts to undo the musical welkin, ruminate over quartertonalism and so forth, until by the chemistry of his genius he would evolve or distill an atonal, a quartertonal music that would have some appeal for others besides bluestockings. He would weave all materials to hand so that "the weary and worn, or the man burdened with affairs, may enjoy a few moments of solace and refreshment," to quote Haydn. He would thus make the masterpieces beside which the earlier attempts would seem miniatures, but he certainly would not be the "father of the symphony."

The pedants glibly talk of Haydn and Mozart as though they were a team like Laurel and Hardy. To their contemporaries they probably appeared as dif-

ferent as Wagner and Brahms do to us: in two hundred years' time our descendants will be talking of Wagner and Brahms, and thinking it astute to be able to tell which of them wrote a given orchestral piece. Mozart was essentially a dramatic genius like Wagner, while Haydn was a composer of absolute instrumental music like Brahms. True that Mozart wrote much superb pure instrumental music, even showed Haydn the way, but the fact remains that Mozart's comic operas, outstanding among his works, hold the stage today, while few are even aware that Haydn wrote thirteen operas that, devoid of the qualities that so differentiated him from Mozart, have disappeared into oblivion. The genesis of the music of the two men is entirely different: Mozart's springs from Eighteenth Century society, while Haydn's has its sources in the countryside. There is a rusticity about Haydn's tunes and a breezy something that over-refinement is apt to destroy in Mozart. For this very reason would I say that there is often more human expression in Haydn than in Mozart. We are apt to dismiss Haydn as being "classical" and lacking in the imaginative qualities that we think make Mozart the peer. Until recently it was thought proper to conduct Brahms as one might the ticking of a clock: but a recent discovery that Brahms is "romantic" instead of "classic" has led to the new fashion of suffusing his music with an almost melodramatic sickliness. Why not try this on the "romantic" composer Joseph Haydn, and then see how much passion there is in his fiery allegros, and how much tenderness there is in his rhapsodic slow movements?

III

The idea that there is no feeling or human expression in Haydn's music probably originated in the gross exaggeration of the amount of feeling there is in Beethoven. One hears Beethoven called "the man who freed music," as though music had been hide-bound in his immediate predecessors, and especially in Haydn, who, professing not to be able to understand Beethoven's early efforts, was nevertheless his chief influence. One is led to imagine the young Beethoven toiling at his counterpoint exercises under the frigid Haydn, suddenly banging the table and revolting to the limit of a resolution to free music once and for all from its up-to-that-moment mathematical aridity. Some of the stuff that has been written about the human element in Beethoven makes very lurid if not ludicrous reading. Romain Rolland in his "Beethoven the Creator," when talking about the Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2, mentions a "distracted cry being repeated three times." This distracted cry is nothing but a high A that might just as easily be the sound of a pea falling on a plate. If this is a distracted cry, then Haydn's music and everybody else's must be full of agonized shrieks and wails. Then later ". . . A torrent of blood follows in their wake." Said torrent of blood, according to the quotation in the Rolland volume, is nothing but the chord of F sharp minor in triplet arpeggio. Music must be a bloody business if a mere arpeggio can be so horrible, and what is more Haydn's music must be every bit as bloody. Admitted that there is more human madness in Beethoven than in Haydn, it is nevertheless a distorted vision that allows Beethoven to dwarf Haydn to pigmydom, just as it is lack of understanding that makes Haydn play second fiddle to Mozart.

Haydn was a mature genius who made a most significant contribution to musical literature, flavored with an originality all its own, redolent of an unsentimental

emotionalism, and universal enough to include humor in its stride, and possibly bloody shrieks and cosmic wails, but discussion of this element I prefer to leave to the pens of such as M. Romain Rolland. I will, however, venture into the realm of prophecy and predict that long after the music of Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Liszt has been relegated to oblivion for lack of the "classical" element, Haydn's best symphonies and quartets will still be heard and loved because they are so human—because of their "romanticism."

HAYDN RECORDINGS

TOY SYMPHONY. Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Felix Weingartner. One 12-inch disc (C-50309D). \$1.25.

TOY SYMPHONY. Two sides. Victor Concert Orchestra. One 10-inch disc (V-20215). 75c.

SYMPHONY No. 2 in D Major (*The London*). Six sides. John Barbirolli's Chamber Orchestra. Three 12-inch discs (V-35981 to V-35983). \$1.25 each.

SYMPHONY No. 4 in D Major (*The Clock*). Seven sides and MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: *Scherzo*. (Mendelssohn) One side. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini. Four 12-inch discs (V-7077 to V-7080) in album. Victor Set M-57. \$8. (*This recording of the Clock Symphony is also available in long-playing form: V-L7003; \$4.50.*)

SYMPHONY No. 4 in D Major (*The Clock*). Seven sides and ABU HASSAN: *Overture*. (Weber) One side. Hallé Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Harty. Four 12-inch discs (C-67351D to C-67354D) in album. Columbia Set No. 76. \$6.

SYMPHONY No. 6 in G Major (*Surprise*). Six sides. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Three 12-inch discs (V-7058 to V-7060) in album. Victor Set M-55. \$6.50.

SYMPHONY No. 13 in G Major. Six sides. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Clemens Krauss. Three 10-inch discs (V-4189 to V-4191). \$1 each.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY DANCE. One side and MINUET. (Boccherini) One side. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski. One 12-inch disc (V-7256). \$2.

CONCERTO IN D MAJOR for Violoncello and Orchestra. Six sides. Guilhermina Suggia ('Cello) and orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. Three 12-inch discs (V-D1518 to V-D1520). \$2 each.

QUARTET IN F MAJOR, Op. 3, No. 5. Four sides. Léner String Quartet. Two 12-inch discs (C-9658 and C-9659). \$2 each.

QUARTET IN C MAJOR, Op. 54, No. 2. Five sides and QUARTET IN D: *Vivace*, Op. 64, No. 5. (Haydn) One side. Musical Art Quartet. Three 12-inch discs (C-67320D to C-67322D) in album. Columbia Set No. 69. \$4.50.

QUARTET IN D MAJOR, Op. 64, No. 5. Six sides. Capet String Quartet. Three 10-inch discs (C-D13070 to C-D13072). \$1.50 each.

QUARTET IN G MINOR, Op. 74, No. 3. Buxbaum String Quartet. Five sides and FANTASIA IN D MINOR. (Mozart) One side. Franz J. Hirt (Piano). Three 12-inch discs (PD-95128 to PD-95130). \$1.50 each.

QUARTET IN G MAJOR, Op. 76, No. 1. Five sides and ALLEGRO. (Dittersdorf) One side. Budapest String Quartet. Three 12-inch discs (V-D1075 to V-D1077). \$2 each.

QUARTET IN G MAJOR, Op. 76, No. 1. Four sides. Poltronieri Quartet. Two 12-inch discs (C-9777 to C-9778). \$2 each.

QUARTET IN D MINOR, Op. 76, No. 2. Four sides. Poltronieri Quartet. Two 12-inch discs (C-GQX10135 and C-GQX10136). \$2 each.

QUARTET IN D MINOR, Op. 76, No. 2. Four sides. Elman String Quartet. Two 12-inch discs (V-6701 and V-6702). \$2 each.

QUARTET IN C MAJOR: *Theme and Variations*, Op. 76, No. 3. One side and ANDANTE CANTABILE. (Tschaikowsky) One side. Elman String Quartet. One 12-inch disc (V-6634). \$2.

QUARTET IN B FLAT MAJOR, Op. 76, No. 4. Six sides. International String Quartet. Three 12-inch discs (G-109 to G-111). \$2 each.

QUARTET IN D MAJOR, Op. 76, No. 5. Six sides. Léner String Quartet. Three 12-inch discs (C-67668D to C-67670D) in album. Columbia Set No. 125. \$4.50.

QUARTET IN E FLAT, Op. 76, No. 6. Five sides and FOUR-PART FANTASIA No. 4 in C Minor. (Purcell) One side. International String Quartet. Three 12-inch discs (G-140 to G-142). \$2 each.

TRIO IN G MAJOR. Four sides. Alfred Cortot (Piano), Jacques Thibaud (Violin) and Pablo Casals ('Cello). Two 10-inch discs (V-3045 and V-3046). \$2 each.

SONATA IN D MAJOR. Two sides. Violet Gordon Woodhouse (Harpichord). One 12-inch disc (V-D1589). \$2.

SONATA IN C MINOR. Three sides and VARIATIONS IN A MINOR. (Rameau). One side. Kathleen Long (Piano). Two 12-inch discs (G-138 and G-139). \$2 each.

JAHRESZEITEN: *Komm O Holder Lenz*. One side and EIN DEUTSCHES REQUEM: *Selig sind, die da Leid Tragen*. (Brahms) One side. Chor der Sinakademie, Berlin, conducted by George Schumann. One 12-inch disc (V-EH258). \$1.75.

SCHÖPFUNG: (a) *Stimmt an die Saiten*. (b) *Vollendet ist dies grosse Werk*. Two sides. Chor der Singakademie conducted by George Schumann. One 10-inch disc (V-EG1065). \$1.25.

MY MOTHER BIDS ME BIND MY HAIR. One side and THE LASS WITH THE DELICATE AIR. (Arne) One side. Anna Case (Soprano) with piano accompaniment. One 10-inch disc (C-2341D). 75c.



Jacob and Isaac (and Daniel)

By R. D. DARRELL

Gershwin and Goldberg lunching at the Ritz, a sore trial to the earnest waiter:

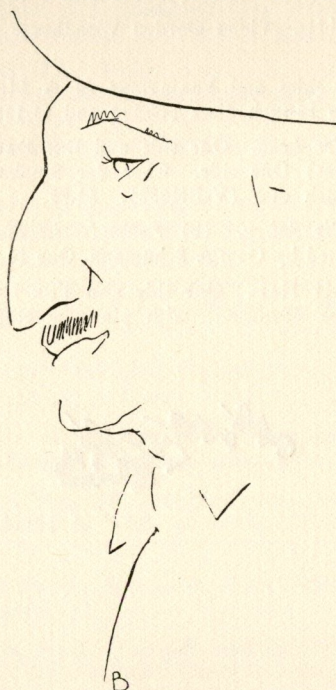
"Won't you have some of this, Ike?"

"You know I can't eat anything as rich as that, George."

"Well, you don't think I can, do you? Take it away, waiter, and bring us a couple of tomato juice cocktails, large glasses."

Problem for the student in gastro-aesthetics: If Brahms preluded an afternoon's composition with a whole tin of sardines, carefully spooning out the last drop of oil, and if Sir Landon Ronald derived inspiration for his song, *Down in the Forest*, from a luncheon of grapefruit, salmon trout, cold grouse and salad, followed by white wine, black coffee and the best Havana cigars, what sort of music and criticism will blossom under the spring showers of tomato juice? Luxuriant growth, at least, is fostered. From George (born Jacob) we have the scores for *Of Thee I Sing* and the *Second Rhapsody*; from Dr. Isaac, *George Gershwin, A Study in American Music*.*

Arch-enemy Daniel Gregory Mason must seek grounds for his charges of "Oriental



ISAAC GOLDBERG
(From a caricature by Emma Bourne)

extravagance . . . sensuous brilliancy . . . intellectual facility and superficiality . . . tendency to exaggeration and disproportion . . . poignant eroticism and pessimism" in the output not the intake of these Jews. That he will find grounds to his own satisfaction and without great effort is no daring prophecy. Yet even to this rufous Scotch-Irish Yankee, gripped by New England chill and conscience, comes the disquieting suspicion that the voices of the first two of our Biblical trio speak with true American accent, while

the stern tones issuing from Daniel's den strangely echo those of the Hebraic lawgivers.

"Pessimism" I hear, and stop to wonder whether it is preferable as sloughed off intellectually by Daniel, or as vented in Jacob and Isaac's hypochondriacal small talk of nervous ailments, insomnia, and abstinence from tobacco (under which influence even Gershwin's cigar—prop inseparable as Groucho Marx's stogy—has disappeared in recent months).

* GEORGE GERSHWIN: *A Study in American Music*. By Isaac Goldberg. New York: Simon & Schuster. \$3.50.

"Poignant eroticism" . . . The eminently respectable—in deed if not in word—doctor is surely above reproach. Gershwin, by the evidence of his biographer, is quite correct in the presence of women; "for that matter, his conversation among men is masculine, but hardly Rabelaisian. He has been known, before his sister Frances was married, to suggest in company that she pull her dresses down." True, I heard him sadly (perhaps "poignantly") bewail the dearth of attractive girls in Boston, but he even more poignantly bewails his marital freedom, thinks a compatible wife would steady his nerves, enable him to compose more and better, enjoy life more sanely and serenely. Nor does one find the erotic note stressed in his music. The slow theme of the *Rhapsody in Blue*, the solo violin in *An American in Paris* are lush rather than amorous, with Tschairowskian or Straussian overtones. A slow passage of the *Second Rhapsody*, befitting its Boston birth better than its Hollywood conception, is positively Brahmsian . . . a "Sunday School Hour," as someone irreverently giped of the chorale in Brahms' First Symphony. And how far from the usual Tin Pan Alley caterwauling over love is the tender sentiment of *Someone to Watch Over Me*, *The Man I Love* and *So Are You*.

But for the charges of facility, superficiality and disproportion, Daniel comes to the judgment with corroborating witnesses, not the least of whom are the defendants themselves.

Small grounds for guilt in the songs. There Gershwin's mastery is seldom questioned, never out and out denied. Facility he has to be sure, but a facility that grows from unremitting effort, indefatigably developed craftsmanship. Even Mason, sweating laboriously over his own unwieldy scores, must envy the enemy's dexterity and sureness, moving without appreciable pause or setback from the early spontaneity and color of *Stairway to Paradise* to the long-breathed fantasy and humor that infuse *Of Thee I Sing* from flamboyant torchlight parade to rollicking finale. There can be no implication of superficiality to this sort of facility; the touch is light but it strikes accurately, deeply. Disproportion? The piano preludes, the most characteristic songs are as perfectly proportioned as well cut gems.

II

Ah, but the large works . . . the loose construction, the padded joints, the plethora of ill digested material in the *First Rhapsody*, the Concerto, even *An American in Paris* . . . Jacob's severest critic is best pal Isaac. Goldberg's dissecting scalpel lays ruthlessly bare the weaknesses of these works. Yet as he says of the *Rhapsody*, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, jazz is "carried into definite, if hesitant, symphonic form." The jump from small to large forms is a giant's step. Wolf never negotiated it; Schumann, Schubert, Chopin with but varying success. Granting Gershwin talent, can that succeed where even genius has failed? The answer to date has been no, but pronounced with progressively decreasing emphasis. The *Second Rhapsody* comes close to reversing the verdict. Lured to Hollywood near the end of the fabulous salary era, Gershwin was royally paid to stay seven weeks, write three or four minutes of incidental movie music—"Oriental extravagance" in truth. But the night life and "sensuous brilliance" seemed to have less appeal than midnight oil and creative sweat. Gershwin evolved his small but significant material into a sturdy, well articulated structure, a vigor-

ous development of almost a single theme, demonstrating a new economy of means.

Now strict sonata form is a matter of mathematics; a Clementi can write impeccable examples. True mastery of form goes beyond mathematics, implies uncramped command of architectural solidity. How could one analyze a work like *Sea Drift* from an academic point of view, yet how could one deny its perfect welding of content and form? The *Second Rhapsody* is no *Sea Drift*, but its material finds the exact, the inevitable expression it demands. Imagination and vital energy are expressed coherently and logically. Gershwin's studies bear fruit not in studious aping of old models but in the application of old ideals to new material. And we are spared the anachronisms of Powell and the *Rhapsodie Nègre*—"the swarthy faces of his protagonists suddenly assume the Jesuitical smile of Liszt"—or Cadman, whose Indians' "only arrows are collars from Troy" (Mason's pungent, perfect phrases).

Witness in corroboration Charles Martin Loeffler, whose own gleaming scores betray consummate knowledge of musical craftsmanship, whose unity of style exacts praise even from Mason. To him the *Second Rhapsody* is not only the freshest inspiration of all the new music he has heard in recent years, but the most sincere contemporary vitalization of symphonic form.

Indeed the critics, admitting the craftsmanship of the new work, shift their ground to regret that it lacks the spontaneity and recklessness of the *Rhapsody in Blue*. Perhaps the devil-may-care spirit, the rapturous plunge into the unknown are missing, but the same forcefulness and vitality are there, gaining in power from their repression into more logical channels.

The scoring, too, does not lose in ingenuity while it gains in sureness. The Lisztian fustian has been eliminated from the piano writing. The derbied trumpets have given place to enrichment of the standard orchestral palette: the Rabelaisian nose-blowing glissandos for French horns, for instance, never before written, thought impossible to perform.

III

Not the least admirable characteristic of both Gershwin and Goldberg is that however occupied they may be with hypochondria, however subject to dyspepsia in the flesh, none of it reaches over to sour their writings with gouty ill-humor. Much as I admire the lofty artistic standards set by our Daniel, I admire still more the prodigious gusto and appetites, a seriousness of purpose leavened by honest laughter, of Jacob and Isaac. I was glad to have met Gershwin before reading Goldberg's book, because the man presented there would have a ring of the fabulous, the too too admirable to be quite genuine,—if one had not talked with him, gained the same impression of his vitality, his ingenuousness and the wide range of his imagination.

Gershwin, no less than Gershwin's music, has no trace of the dilettante, the climber, or the smug self-made man. He has made a lot of money by the sweat of his brow and uses it not only to achieve bodily freedom from the discomforts and uncertainties of life, but in the search for freedom of the soul from the stifling, feverish confines of a successful songsmith's Broadway existence. The most heart-felt thing he said to me was when he lamented the fact that in New York he is

deprived of contact with "relaxed musicians"—older, settled men, less intent on getting somewhere, more intent on what they are getting.

Art to him means activity, and not merely in music. A collector of Pascin, Bellows, Dufy, Utrillo, Rouault, his passionate interest in what makes the wheels go round has led him to start sketching and painting himself. Several of his drawings are reproduced in Goldberg's book, and very creditable they are, especially the self portrait and the truly "seeing" portrait sketch of his grandmother. Talking with him, long before the topic of the *Second Rhapsody* had been exhausted, the conversation veered around to painting. "Do you know this Boston man, Romano? I noticed an exhibition of his yesterday, got in touch with him, and I'm going around to his studio today to see some more of his work . . . You don't know Rouault! An amazing genius. An old man, trained as a designer of stained glass windows. I've been thinking what a marvellous Last Supper he could do . . . got my cousin to write him about it . . . I lie awake nights planning just how he would paint it."

He is naïvely proud of having completed his first essays in oils, portraits of his erstwhile collaborator Bill Daly and his sister-in-law. As in his music he has struck out boldly, conscious of his lack of technique, but conscious also that the only way to learn is to do. The imprint of the man's originality and directness is unmistakable. "Oriental extravagance," O Daniel, or American vigor and straightforwardness?

Again, it is hardly an indication of superficiality that before submitting the score of the Piano Concerto to Dr. Damrosch, Gershwin should hire an orchestra and rehearse the work himself to discover just where he realized his intentions in tone and where he failed. Or before submitting the *Second Rhapsody* to Koussevitzky, to have it rehearsed similarly and in addition recorded by wire to Camden, so that the score might be studied and revised from a phonographic version.

IV

Goldberg gets much of the man and his driving Socratic dæmon into his book. Obviously the major part must recount in detail the facts of a career, but the story is given critical background by a running fire of quotation and analysis. Opinion, harsh as well as enthusiastic, is impartially reproduced. This would be doing the job in competent fashion; spiced with the extensive series of photographs, reproductions of bronze heads and drawings, the book would be assured of a lively sale among the very considerable horde of Gershwin admirers. The scheme is born out further by the attractive format, a superb photograph on the smartly cellophaned paper wrapper, the brisk titling of the musical quotations: "Tschaikowsky Translated Into American," "American Music Signs its Declaration of Independence," etc.

But Goldberg does not stop there, running the risk of superficial brilliance. The work is not merely a fully documented source book, it presents a digest of opinion, evaluates, compares, prophesies. In the opening section, "Young Man of Manhattan," and even more in the closing Stretto, Goldberg digs deeply, gets gold. "A Study in American Music" is no catch-phrase sub-title. It is a study, and far-ranging, keenly discerning criticism.

It is not a pæan of praise that this gifted Jacob needs. He gets more than enough of that, for it is hard indeed for anyone who "can believe only in a god who would know how to dance" to write in other than glowing terms of the fresh exuberant stream that has swept so much wishy-washy sentimentalism out of popular music, of the talent that has satirized our martial spirit and political institutions with a tonal gusto that even Sullivan's best seldom eclipsed.

"Goldberg doesn't slop all over me," says Gershwin himself. "I like the way he continually points to what I should do in the future." Gershwin scarcely needs additional incentive, but intelligent guiding is good for his still imperfectly disciplined energies.

A man as much the master of one medium as Gershwin, subjected to so much indiscriminate adulation, is to be respected when he strikes out in deeper waters to match his talents with those of far greater composers than Tin Pan Alley will ever know, to subject himself to criticism by the highest artistic standards. And when his efforts are as indefatigably sustained as Gershwin's, show as much progress in craftsmanship and growth in stature as the new *Rhapsody* shows over the first, respect must be leavened with admiration.

Perhaps a Daniel can delicately mark the line where Jewish push and ambition may be separated from immaculately Nordic energy and idealism; I can't. But I stoutly hold that if Gershwin's are the Jewish tastes and standards that are "dominating our whole contemporary attitude toward instrumental music," so much the better for our attitude, and (with a gusty echo of the *Second Rhapsody* still in my ears) so much the better for instrumental music.



Recorded Programs

[Such a vast quantity of good music is now available for the phonograph that quite frequently records of more than ordinary merit are overlooked. It will be the purpose of this page to call attention to such records. Readers are invited to send in their suggestions. Records which appeared prior to the appearance of Disques and hence have never been reviewed in these pages will be given preference. All types and makes will be considered, and an effort will be made to avoid the hackneyed and excessively familiar.]

SCHUMANN

"Dichterliebe"

Thom. Denijs (Baritone) with piano accompaniment.

[Three 12-inch discs (V-FD6 to V-FD8). \$2 each.]

The sixteen songs comprising the *Dichterliebe* were set to poems from Heine's *Buch der Lieder*, and were a product of the year 1840, after Schumann had won Clara Wieck. They are a most intimate expression of the various moods arising out of his love, and are by turns tender, joyous, despairing, sad, and gently ironical, bound together into an exquisite unity by the fairy web of sound. The seventh song, "Ich grolle nicht," is often heard in recitals, but the other fifteen are not less lovely. . . . The artists in this set, otherwise unknown to the reviewer, enter into the spirit of the cycle with genuine feeling and understanding, as well as with ability. The labels omit the name of the accompanist, whose part is as important as that of the singer. The recording is good, except that the pianoforte reproduction is not up to present standards.

RALPH W. SNYDER

HAYDN

Trio in G Major

Alfred Cortot (Piano), Jacques Thibaud (Violin) and Pablo Casals ('Cello).

[Two 10-inch discs (V-3045 and V-3046). \$2 each.]

This lovely little Trio in G Major is one of the finest recording achievements of that incomparable trio made up of Alfred Cortot, Jacques Thibaud and Pablo Casals. The music is spirited and robust, and, needless to say, finds in these performers admirably qualified interpreters. The familiar *Rondo all' ungarese* is done with almost incredible delicacy and speed. The recording throughout is superb. Though issued several years ago, the set could very easily be passed off as a recent recording. The discs are expensive ones, but they are well worth the price.

HAYDN

Symphony No. 13 in G Major

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Clemens Krauss.

[Three 10-inch discs (V-4189 to V-4191). \$1 each.]

The Symphony No. 13 in G Major was written in 1787 and is one of the dozen Haydn wrote for the *Concerts de la Loge Olympique* at Paris. Every one of its four movements is delightful. This recording is the only one available, but luckily it is an excellent one, sympathetically played and skilfully recorded. The set makes a worthy addition to any record library.

CHERUBINI

"Medea" Overture

Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli.

[One 12-inch disc (C-GQX10015). \$2.]

Cherubini is generally considered a pretty dull and tiresome composer nowadays. This fiery Overture, however, is very far from being dull; it is, instead, a graceful and striking piece of music. The lyric tragedy to which this is the Overture was written for the Théâtre Feydeau, Paris, and was introduced there in March, 1797. The Milan Symphony Orchestra—which is apparently just another name for the orchestra of La Scala—gives a smooth, vigorous performance, and the recording is excellent.



ORCHESTRA

TSCHAIKOWSKY

V-7499

and

V-7500

1812 OVERTURE. Four sides. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 624.

The *1812 Overture* is surely no novelty, but somehow the recorders have never given it the affectionate attention they have lavished on certain other works of its type. Several years ago, when the electrical process was still new, the indications were that the *1812 Overture* would be almost a monthly feature in the supplements. Victor issued Eugène Goossens' version among the first examples of the electrical records, and at about the same time Columbia released Sir Henry J. Wood's set. And shortly afterward Brunswick was out with a single record version by the Cleveland Symphony. But since then the *1812* has mercifully been allowed to slumber, so that this new release by the Philadelphia Orchestra isn't so flagrant a duplication as might at first be supposed. This pair of discs provides as stirring a recording of the piece as anyone could reasonably ask for. The recording is as good as any we have had from the Philadelphia Orchestra and brings out details that were missing in the earlier versions of the work. Stokowski and his men set it forth with the proper spirit and gusto, and the rousing commotion they make at the end of the piece is astounding; sensitive listeners, not too absorbed by the course of the battle, will probably find it wise to retire to a safe distance from the reproducing machine at this point. For those who want an *1812*, this set can be highly recommended. It is hardly likely that it will be surpassed for some time to come.

GRIEG

C-68024D

TWO ELEGIAC MELODIES for *String Orchestra*, Op. 34.

Two sides. Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

It seems odd that a composer so appealing and also so popular as Grieg is should have been so little recorded during the past year or two. There are some charming things in his list of works, and not all of them are as hackneyed as the Piano Concerto and the *Peer Gynt* Suites. For recording purposes, moreover, they are admirable. These *Two Elegiac Melodies* for string orchestra are arrangements—by Grieg himself—of two of his songs, *The Wounded Heart* and *Springtide*. Grieg, when publishing his transcriptions of the songs for string orchestra, dispensed with the verses—by the Norwegian poet, Aasmund Olafsen Vinje—but slightly altered the titles. Thus *The Wounded Heart* became *Heart Wounds*, and *Springtide* became *The Last Spring*. Both pieces, skilfully written for the strings, have an eloquence, a straightforward, direct appeal, and a haunting tenderness that cannot easily be resisted. The strings of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw show off to fine advantage, and the recording does Mengelberg's superbly drilled musicians ample justice.

BRAHMS

B-90217

to

B-90221

SYMPHONY NO. 2 in *D Major*, Op. 73. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Max Fiedler. Nine sides and

PIANO TRIO in *C Major*: *Scherzo*, Op. 87. One side. Berner Trio (Hier-Brun-Lehr).

Five 12-inch discs in album. Brunswick Set No. 35. \$7.50.



This is rather a dull month so far as orchestral records go. A Brahms symphony is therefore all the more welcome, even if it is a duplication. In the Brahms symphonies, as in all genuine masterpieces, there is plenty of room for duplication and difference of interpretation. None of the symphonies has yet appeared in a recording that could fairly be called final and unapproachable. Besides, this only make the third electrical recording of the Second Symphony. The first one to appear, Walter Damrosch's Columbia set, is pretty dull and hardly provides a satisfactory recording of the work. Stokowski's Victor version, released a little over a year ago, is much better. It is well recorded. It benefits by an admirable reading. And it is beautifully played. But a brief and unnecessary cut (from the fifth measure of page 52—Eulenburg miniature—to the eighth measure of page 53) in the second movement is rather annoying—the more so because there is no discernible reason for it.

The Symphony in *D Major* was written, for the most part, in the Summer of 1877, partly at Pörttschach on the Wörther See in Carinthia and partly at Lichtenthal in the vicinity of Baden-Baden. In December of that year it was played in a piano arrangement (four hands) by Brahms and Ignaz Brüll before a chosen audience. There has been considerable difference of opinion upon the date of the first public performance, but December 30, 1877, with Hans Richter conducting, seems to be as good and logical a one as any. In any case, the first performance, whenever it occurred, was highly successful, and those critics who found the First, which preceded the Second by scarcely a year, cold and recondite were warmed by the sunny, jovial measures of the new work. Brahms himself was extremely fond of the Symphony. In speaking of it to his friends, though, he always described it as gloomy and awesome, fit only to be played by musicians with mourning bands on their sleeves. Writing to Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, he explained that: "It is really no Symphony, but merely a *Sinfonie*, and I shall have no need to play it to you beforehand. You merely sit down at the piano, put your little feet alternately on each pedal and strike the chord of *F minor* for some time, top and bottom, and changing between *fortissimo* and *pianissimo*."

Max Fiedler will be remembered by record collectors for his recording of the Brahms Fourth Symphony, issued a little over a year ago by Brunswick. His reading is not so polished and graceful as Stokowski's, nor is the Berlin Philharmonic the equal of the Philadelphia Orchestra, but Fiedler's buoyant, vigorous interpretation has its points. The jovial and tragic elements are nicely balanced. The recording is uneven. In the main it is very good—in parts more than good—but there are places where the music comes out blurred and somewhat distorted. It should be noted that the record sides are well filled, so that the whole work only requires nine record sides, making the album considerably cheaper than the Stokowski version, a rather important point these days. . . . The odd side is given over to the *Scherzo* from the Piano Trio in *C Major*, Op. 87. It makes a good filler. The whole Trio, incidentally, has been recorded by Polydor, and the set was reviewed in the March, 1930, issue of *Disques*.



WAGNER

V-C2237

and

V-C2238

IMPORTED

MOTIVES FROM THE "RING OF THE NIBELUNGS."

Four sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lawrence Collingwood. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

This is an admirable undertaking, and one for which students of Wagner—whether they collect his records or not—will be grateful. The motives from the *Ring* are so numerous and they have so important a part in a proper understanding of the work that it obviously behooves the listener to get them firmly fixed in mind. Otherwise it is hardly likely that he will be able to appreciate to the full Wagner's intentions; inevitably many subtleties will escape him. A thorough knowledge of these wonderfully expressive motives has not always been easy to obtain. Not every one can read a musical score, and not every one is able to hear actual performances of the *Ring*. H.M.V., which has already done so much toward putting this work on records, has now provided a surprisingly efficient solution to the problem. Here, assembled on the four sides of two 12-inch records, are ninety important motives from these great music dramas. The plan is very simple and very effective. A leaflet, listing the names and numbers of the various motives, together with the musical quotations, accompanies the records. Before each motive is played, an announcer calls out the proper number. One then has only to consult the list—and listen. The advantages of this method are so obvious that they need not be gone into detail here. The London Symphony, under Lawrence Collingwood, plays the motives, so that one hears them, not in the bald and by no means adequate piano version, but in the full glory of Wagner's orchestration, making recognition much easier when one comes to the music dramas themselves. As a list of the motives accompanies the records, they need not be given here. These carefully prepared and well recorded discs have an immense educational value, and show once again to what useful purposes the phonograph can be put. Needless to say, those who are collecting records from the *Ring* can hardly do without them. It is to be hoped that the same plan will be applied to the other Wagnerian music dramas.

MEHNDELSSOHN

V-11170

to

V-11173

SYMPHONY NO. 4 in A Major ("Italian"), Op. 90. Seven sides and

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: *Wedding March*. One side. La Scala Orchestra conducted by Ettore Panizza.

Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-119. \$6.50.

The Mendelssohn *Italian* Symphony is now available in three versions, two—the above Victor set and Sir Hamilton Harty's Columbia set—of them domestic. The third, an imported Decca set, is scarcely worth taking into consideration, since it is a poor recording and doesn't compare with either the Victor or Columbia versions. Of the three, Sir Hamilton Harty's is probably the best; moreover, it has the added advantage of requiring only three records. But the Scala Orchestra's version is a good one and deserved repressing by Victor. Recording and interpretation are highly satisfactory. The album was reviewed from the imported pressings on page 451 of the December, 1931, issue of *Disques*.

BILLAUT
V-L884
IMPORTED

LA RAPSODIE LIMOUSINE. Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Louis Billaut. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.



RIBERA
V-AF476
IMPORTED

SYMPHONY ON CATALAN FOLK SONGS. Two sides. Barcelona Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Louis Gelabert. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Each of these works, one by an obscure French composer and the other by an equally obscure Spanish composer, is based on folk songs. There, however, their similarities end. The title of Billaut's work might be misleading. It refers to an old province of Central France, now included in the department of Corrèze and Haut-Vienne. Billaut is not a native of Limousine; he was born in Seine-et-Marne, in Northern France. But during a visit to the Limousine country some years ago he was so impressed with the beauty and charm of the region that he decided to write a rhapsody celebrating the district, utilizing for this purpose a number of folk-songs well known to the Limousine inhabitants. The work, as given here, is in two parts, one on each side of the disc. The first part, *Pastorale*, is constructed on two themes: the first, a charming reverie, undergoes considerable changes, and the second, a jolly little song called *L'heureuse jardinière*, forms a sort of interlude between the developments of the first theme and provides the necessary contrast. The second part, the rollicking *Bourrée*, is based on a number of songs popular in Central France; among them are: *Per la bien chanta, vivo la Limousina*; *Cherchava las barjeiras*; *Lou curé que la counfessavo*; *D'engueiro n'ei pas jour*, and others.

How well the composer has done his work it would be difficult for a foreigner to say, but the results are eminently pleasing, and that they were gratifying to the natives of the district Billaut is honoring is indicated by the following notice published in *La Revue Limousine* for November, 1931:

Répons-le. Il s'agit, avec la *Rapsodie Limousine*, d'une œuvre hors de pair, dont la richesse harmonique est incomparable. Louis Billaut a largement puisé, avec un goût parfait, dans ces Airs Limousins dont on ne goûte pas assez, dans notre pays, la saveur, la grâce, la vigueur truculente.

The music is fresh and attractive and full of lively tunes ingeniously orchestrated. The work is exceptionally well played and recorded by a symphony orchestra under the direction of the composer. Particularly notable is the recording of the kettledrums. Among Billaut's other compositions are: *Le sonnet aux étoiles*; *Au jardin de mon coeur*, and many compositions for orchestra and piano, as well as numerous arrangements.

Such flattering terms as were applied to the Billaut piece cannot also be used in connection with the Ribera work. None of the musical dictionaries and histories the reviewer has consulted offers any information about José Ribera. His dates are unknown to us, but he lived during the past century and was a close friend of the musician and poet, José Anselmo Clavé (1827-1872), the founder of the famous Coros Clavés of Barcelona and the composer of numerous choral works. Although Ribera was primarily interested in religious compositions, because of his friendship for Clavé, he wrote this piece called *Symphony on Catalan Folk Songs*, and the work was introduced, under Clavé's direction, at one of the matinee con-



certs of the Euterpe Choir.

The piece is clumsily written and clumsily orchestrated. Ribera's material is insipid and his use of it even duller. The music is wholly lacking in charm and originality. It is played in a haphazard manner by the Barcelona Philharmonic Orchestra under Gelabert, and the recording is coarse and noisy. The disc may be avoided without any appreciable loss, but the Billaut work is worth hearing.

SCHMITT
PA-59.096
IMPORTED

RONDE BURLESQUE. Two sides. Association des Concerts Poulet conducted by Gaston Poulet. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

DEBUSSY
O-238.264
and
O-238.265
IMPORTED

LA BOITE À JOUJOUX. Four sides. Paris Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by G. Cloëz. Two 10-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

The Schmitt *Ronde Burlesque* does not appear on the list of the composer's works given in the latest edition of Grove's, and so perhaps is a recent work. Though of little consequence, it is an interesting piece. The orchestration, in particular, is notable, revealing Schmitt's skill and ingenuity in obtaining unhackneyed and arresting combinations. The effective orchestration in the *Tragedy of Salomé*, it will be recalled, was perhaps the most distinguished feature of that work. The performance of the *Ronde Burlesque* by the Association des Concerts Poulet is a crisp, smooth one, and the recording is clear and nicely balanced.

Debussy wrote three ballets for the Diaghilev company. "*La boîte à joujoux* (1913), a ballet for children, with scenario and inimitable pictures by M. André Hellé," says Edward B. Hill in his *Modern French Music*, "enters a new dramatic vein perhaps faintly foreshadowed in *The Children's Corner*. In place of a mature poetic observation of child-life, however, this ballet is pervaded by a spirit, sometimes mock-heroic, often naïvely humorous, well befitting its subject. The action revolves around a box of toys whose adventures are echoed in music where parody and poetical feeling combine in the most singular manner." There are nine numbers: *Une des poupées se réveille et marche en cadence*; *Pas de l'Elephant*; *Danse de l'Arlequin*; *Le Soldat Anglais*; *Polichinelle*; *Danse de la Poupée*; *Rondo des Poupées*; *Rondo générale*.

The music is attractive, but the performance by the Paris Philharmonic is by no means extraordinary, and the recording ought to be a great deal better.

WEINBERGER
V-4198

SCHWANDA, THE BAGPIPE PLAYER: *Polka and Furiant*. Two sides. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Leo Blech. One 10-inch disc. \$1.

The last in the field with a record of the *Polka and Furiant* from Weinberger's *Schwanda*, Victor nevertheless has the most satisfactory recording of the piece. Dr. Blech and the hard-worked Berlin State Opera Orchestra play the music with gusto, and the recording is fresh and clear. The disc was noticed briefly on page 257 of the August, 1931, issue of *Disques*, when the imported pressings arrived.

BALAKIREFF

V-DB4801

and

V-DB4802

IMPORTED

THAMAR: *Symphonic Poem*. Four sides. Société des Concerts du Conservatoire conducted by Piero Coppola.
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.



Most of the prominent Russian composers of the past century are abundantly represented in the record catalogues, and men like Tschaikowsky and Rimsky-Korsakow, indeed, have long been one of the main props of the record industry, or at least that by no means insignificant part of it which has to do with what is generally considered good music. But Mily Balakireff (1837-1910), one of the most curious figures in the history of music, is thus far represented in the catalogues only with his *Oriental Fantasia*, *Islamey*. A well educated and cultivated musician—though his enemies always vigorously denied this—and a man of great personal charm and power, his influence was soon felt by other composers, for the most part talented amateurs who, under Balakireff's enthusiastic guidance, were soon transformed into serious workers. Moussorgsky, Cui, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakow were among the first to come under his influence, and even Tschaikowsky, who could not subscribe to the ideals that actuated the Group of Five, did not altogether escape the vigilant eyes of Balakireff. It was he who suggested the *Romeo and Juliet* affair, and it was his constant prodding that finally made Tschaikowsky finish the work. A man so interesting deserves more attention than he nowadays gets. We have Rosa Newmarch's authoritative word for it that his "two symphonies and the picturesque music to Shakespeare's *King Lear* are unaccountably neglected." They might make good recording material for Albert Coates, who is always so felicitous with Russian music.

Thamar, "a symphonic poem for orchestra, after a poem by Michail Lermontoff," was published in 1884; it was dedicated to Liszt. Lawrence Gilman, in his Philadelphia Orchestra program notes, describes Lermontoff's poem, written in 1841, as follows:

Thamar (or Tamar), siren and vampire of the Caucasus, was a dreadful and ineluctable queen, who dwelt in an ancient tower by the rushing river Terek, in the narrow defile of Darial—"To this day a border region of mystery, adventure, and romance." Now Tamar "had the beauty of an angel, but the soul of a demon. Cruel, crafty, superhuman, she was wont to lure solitary travelers into her tower to take part in her revels. Then would be heard from the darkness the sound of merriment, as though some nocturnal fête had brought together a throng of men and maidens, to dance under the shadow of death.

"At day's dawn, silence reigns once more, but the river bears along on its foaming waters a lifeless body. At a window appears Tamar's shadowy form, bidding farewell from her tower to the dead lover, in a voice laden with such tenderness that its every accent, breathing sweet promises, seems to presage for them both a happy morrow."

Balakireff was thoroughly familiar with the music of various Oriental races, and the Oriental element is strongly emphasized in *Thamar*. The result is colorful and skilfully orchestrated music. The performance is carefully done, and there is some excellent woodwind playing. The recording does ample justice to Balakireff's brilliant score.



THOMAS
C-50320D

{ **RAYMOND: Overture.** Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Percy Pitt. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The rousing but commonplace tunes of this piece are briskly set forth by an anonymous orchestra under Percy Pitt. The recording is more praiseworthy than the music.



CONCERTO

MOZART
C-68025D
to
C-68027D

{ **CONCERTO NO. 19 in F Major.** (K. 459) Six sides. Georges Boskoff (Piano) and Paris Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by G. Cloëz.
Three 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 170. \$4.50.

V-L876
to
V-L878
IMPORTED

{ **CONCERTO IN C MAJOR for Flute, Harp and Orchestra.** (K. 299) Six sides. Marcel Moyse (Flute), Lily Laskine (Harp) and orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola.
Three 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

The list of recordings of comparatively unfamiliar Mozart works grows steadily, and a good many of them seem to come from France. The companies have shown admirable enterprise in digging up little known works of Mozart for recording purposes; they might well apply the same energy to other composers now and then. The Piano Concerto released by Columbia this month appeared last Fall under the French Parlophone label, and the imported pressings were reviewed on page 405 of the November, 1931, issue of *Disques*. One of the less familiar works for piano and orchestra, it belongs to the last group Mozart wrote for his Vienna concerts. It was composed in 1784. It is in three movements: the first, an Allegro, is sunny and graceful, unmistakably Mozartean; the second, a leisurely and meditative Allegretto, is wonderfully pure in design; and the Finale is marked with a fine vigor and strength. The orchestral part is extraordinarily rich and full, and parts of it, in fact, recall the symphonies. The recording is not wholly satisfactory and is unworthy of the music. The performance is a good, straightforward one, satisfying but not distinguished.

The Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra was composed in Paris in 1778 for the use of the Duke de Guines and his daughter. The Duke was an admirable flautist, as Mozart himself testified, and his daughter was an equally accomplished harpist. Mozart, brought to the attention of the Duke by Grimm, was commissioned to write a flute and harp concerto; and though, according to Jahn, these instruments were by no means Mozart's favorites, "the fact did not prevent his accomplishing his task to the satisfaction of the Duke." Jahn also says that the "writing for the solo instrument is brilliant, without being particularly difficult." When the work was played last Fall by the Philadelphia Orchestra, with Edna

Phillips and W. M. Kincaid as the soloists, Mr. Gilman's program notes contained the following comment by Mr. Carlos Salzedo, the well known harpist:



Jahn had evidently no knowledge of the harp. In the first place, the harp part in Mozart's Concerto is written with the five-finger figures which are typically pianistic and anti-harpistic. On the harp, we do not make use of the five fingers. The architecture of the instrument precludes the use of the fifth finger, due to its small size. Consequently this Concerto is unplayable as written by Mozart. I re-wrote the harp part entirely twelve years ago, and this version is the one used by my colleagues here and abroad. . . . But, even in my edition, the harp part is tremendously difficult.

The Concerto, one imagines, will not have an especially wide appeal, save among those particularly interested in the harp or flute. There are, of course, some beautiful passages here and there, but there are also many dull spots liberally sprinkled throughout the work. The instruments do not make a very happy combination, and the whole effect is somewhat insipid; one sighs with relief when the orchestra relegates the soloists to the background. But Moyse and Lily Laskine play satisfactorily, and they are capably supported by an orchestra under Coppola. The recording leaves little to be desired. One wishes the Piano Concerto were recorded as felicitously.

CHAMBER MUSIC



HOÉRÉE
V-L898
IMPORTED

SEPTUOR *pour Voix de Mezzo, Quatuor à cordes, Flute et Piano*. Two sides. Regime de Lormoy, Pierre-Marie, Marcel Moyse, Lucien Schwartz, Gabrielle Galland, Lucien Quattrocchi and Victor Pascal. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Arthur Hoérée was born in 1897 at St.-Gille-Bruxelle of a Belgium father and a mother of French descent. He began his musical studies as early as at the age of four, and from 1908 to 1911 he was a student at the Brussels Royal Conservatory. Then he momentarily abandoned his musical work, taking up scientific studies in order to prepare for an engineering examination. In 1919, moving to Paris, he resumed his musical work, studying fugue and counterpoint with Paul Vidal and orchestration with the late Vincent d'Indy. In addition to a quantity of works still in manuscript, the following compositions have been published: *4 Fanfares pour piano; Pastorale et Danse—Quatuor à cordes; Le Merveilleux été—4 mélodies pour chant avec piano ou petit orchestre; Six poëms—chant avec piano*. He is at present working on a *Suite Chorégraphique* for orchestra, several works for chorus and orchestra, and various piano pieces. Hoérée has also written much musical criticism for various European journals, and has in preparation studies of Honegger and Albert Roussel (one volume each).

The Septet given here would be more interesting if the voice were omitted. The instrumental background is in places very effective, but the monotonous and commonplace singing weakens the music. The work is divided into three parts: *Chant du Pâtras; Chanson—Le Bonheur*; and *Danse*. All of them reveal various influences—notably those of Debussy and Ravel—and none can be called genuinely distinguished. The performers give an excellent account of themselves, and the recording is very good.



RAVEL

V-DB4803.

to

V-DB4805

IMPORTED

TRIO. Six sides. M. Merkel (Violin), Madeleine Marcell-Herson ('Cello) and Eliane Zurfluh-Tenroc (Piano).
Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

After the *Bolero* the deluge. Ravel, with his name now familiar to thousands who but for this piece would never have heard of him and with his works occupying a conspicuous place in the supplements, can scarcely complain of neglect, and least of all from the recording companies. Nearly all his important works, in fact, are now available in phonograph recordings, and in many cases in two or more versions. Very few other contemporary composers have been treated so handsomely. Until now, however, this lovely Trio, written in 1914, has somehow escaped the eagle (?) eyes of the recorders, so that the above set, besides adding a hitherto unrecorded work to the list of Ravel discs, is something of a novelty; it is, above all, a thoroughly acceptable one, since it has other qualities to commend it besides its relative unfamiliarity.

Roland Manuel, one of Ravel's earliest admirers, has called attention—in an article published in the *Revue Musicale* for April, 1925—to certain analogies which he finds between Ravel's Trio and Saint-Saëns' Trio in F Major, Op. 18, and the same composer's Symphony No. 3. Both of these works, incidentally, have been satisfactorily recorded—the former by the Court of Belgium Trio on C-LFX10 to C-LFX13, and the latter, competently played by an orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola, in Victor album M-100,—so that those who are sufficiently curious will find it quite easy to check up on M. Manuel's statement.

The Ravel Trio is in four movements. Though it is like the Saint-Saëns in that the same clarity, order, elegance and crispness prevail, it is wholly dissimilar in at least one respect: it is effective and interesting throughout, while the Saint-Saëns is not without its moments of dullness. The supple, smoothly flowing first movement, with its striking rhythmical effects and suave, insinuating melodies, is a beautiful piece of music, perhaps, indeed, the finest in the work. The next movement, a sort of scherzo, is entitled "Pantoum," an Eastern dance. The "Passacaille," which follows, begins and ends with bass notes struck by the piano, suggesting a funeral march. Much of this movement is written in the vicinity of middle C or below it, so that a curiously sombre effect is obtained, forming a vivid contrast to the other movements. The impetuous Finale is light and graceful but full of gusto. The writing for the strings and piano is full of felicitous touches and reveals once again Ravel's technical mastery.

Music such as this requires careful handling. It shouldn't be heard too often. Excessive repetition would probably make it cloy. Its delicacy and finesse, so charming at the first few hearings, would probably turn pale and sickly. Those hearty music lovers who boast, like the business man of his daily cold shower, that they can hear with pleasure the Fifth Symphony twice daily over a period of years, will

doubtless find this a major fault; but if you do not intend to maltreat the Trio in any such fashion, it will make a distinguished and rewarding addition to your collection of recorded chamber music.

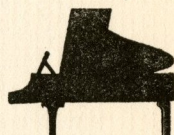


The performers, apparently appearing here for the first time as an ensemble for recording purposes, are extraordinarily good. Each one is unquestionably competent, and they work together admirably. The recording is superb.

- LCEILLET**
C-50316D { **SONATA for Flute and Harpsichord.** Two sides. J. Nada (Flute) and J. Hoorenmann (Harpsichord).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

Lœillet is the name of a family of noted Flemish musicians, whose biographies, Grove's says, "in some instances have become inextricably confused." According to the record label, this Sonata for Flute and Harpsichord is by Jean Bapiste Lœillet of Ghent, a flute-player, oboist and composer who flourished during the second half of the seventeenth century. He spent some time in Paris, where he published various flute pieces, and later he became a member of the orchestra at the Haymarket Theatre, London. The Sonata given here is a charming and melodious piece of music, and it is well played and recorded. The record was made in Switzerland.

PIANO



- SCHUMANN**
V-7493
to
V-7495 { **ÉTUDES SYMPHONIQUES, Op. 13 and Posthumus Opus.**
Six sides. Alfred Cortot (Piano).
Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-122. \$6.50.
- C-17024D
and
C-17025D { **KINDERSCENEN, Op. 15.** Four sides. Yves Nat (Piano).
Two 10-inch discs. \$1 each.

This month Schumann seems to dominate the field of piano recordings. While these sets offer nothing much that is new to records—with the exception of the posthumus pieces in the Cortot album,—neither work has yet been recorded to excess, so that neither can fairly be called a wasteful duplication. The *Études Symphoniques* is a good choice for Cortot, for the work, though nearly a hundred years old, still retains a surprising amount of life and buoyancy, and the fading so noticeable in some of Schumann's other works is not apparent here. The *Études Symphoniques*, consisting of a theme, nine variations and a finale—to which, in this recording, is given an additional group of five variations from a posthumus opus,—are among the most effective of Schumann's works in the smaller forms. The work is dedicated to William Sterndale Bennett, a young English musician whom Schumann held in high esteem. It is said that Schumann hit upon an ingenious way of paying tribute to his friend: at the beginning of the chief subject of the



finale he used a fragment from Marschner's *Templer und Jüdin* (*Du stolzes England, freu dich*).

"A work of the grandest calibre," says Grove's of the *Études Symphoniques*, "which alone would be sufficient to secure him a place in the first rank of composers for the pianoforte, so overpowering is the display of his own individual treatment of the pianoforte—frequently rising to the highest limits of the bravura style of expression—of his overflowing profusion of ideas, and of his boldness in turning the variation-form to his own account."

The various pieces are alternately gay and tender, and there is plenty of contrast and variety. The proper sequence is not observed in this recording, but the order in which the pieces occur is not objectionable. The Op. 13 group has been recorded by Percy Grainger for Columbia, but the posthumus variations are here recorded as a group apparently for the first time. Of Cortot's revealing interpretation little need be said, and that little complimentary; it is notable for its vivacity and charm, its subtlety and refinement, qualities which are not conspicuous in the Grainger album. But the recording varies, and in general is not an impressive piece of work. Certainly it does not equal the finest examples of modern piano reproduction, and in fact is inferior to Cortot's recent recordings of the Ravel Sonata and the Chopin Sonata, Op. 58.

We had a recording of the *Kinderscenen* last Summer from Brunswick. That set, consisting of two 12-inch records played by Johnny Aubert, was an admirable one, competently played and well recorded. This new recording by the young French pianist, Yves Nat, though not so felicitous as the Aubert version as regards interpretation and recording, has the advantage of occupying only two 10-inch records, so that it is less expensive than the older set. As was the case with so many of Schumann's piano compositions, the thirteen pieces comprising the *Kinderscenen* probably had their origin in personal experience. Glancing back at childhood, Schumann found it not unpleasant, and this feeling he vividly communicates in these pieces. All is not undisturbed gaiety, however, for Schumann, realizing that the troubles of childhood are very real and disturbing ones, contrasts his lively movements with several melancholy ones. A satisfying and worthy pair of discs.



**PUCCINI
WAGNER**
C-50319D

OPERA

LA BOHÈME: *Air de Rodolphe*—*Que cette main est froide.*
(Puccini) One side and

LOHENGRIN: *Mon cygne aimé.* (Wagner) One side. Georges Thill (Tenor) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The chief value of this record lies in the skilful singing by Georges Thill, the young French tenor who has been with the Metropolitan the past two seasons. The recording and accompaniments are satisfactory.

SULLIVAN
V-DB4005
to
V-DB4013

IMPORTED

RUDDIGORE: *Comic Opera in Two Acts.* (Gilbert-Sullivan)
Eighteen sides. D'Oyly Carte Opera Company conducted by
Malcolm Sargent. Nine 12-inch discs in album. \$18.



Ruddigore is the ninth of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas to achieve complete electrical transcription. Of the major productions, only *Princess Ida* remains to be done by the new methods, and how well this running fountain of melody—the only three-act piece in the series—would repay the effort!

Thespis was never published as a score; the gay chorus, "Climbing over rocky mountains," in *The Pirates of Penzance*, was carried over by the authors from *Thespis* to that operetta. *The Sorcerer*, if only as a historical curiosity, would find an appreciable number of purchasers in England, if not in this country. As for my own desire to have even *Utopia, Limited* and *The Grand Duke* perpetuated in magical wax, that can hardly serve as a gauge of public interest in the swan songs of the irreplaceable pair. Yet the sheer novelty of the idea, plus more than one engaging moment in the action, might draw forth at least a paying response.

I am quite sure that such early electrical recordings as *The Mikado* will be remade in the light of the later knowledge and wisdom that have accumulated in the studios. What a stride is to be heard between the days of the electrical *Mikado* and the new release—thus far in England only—of *Ruddigore*! It should be noticed that D'Oyly Carte has countenanced the omission of the second Finale, and also that of the song, "The battle's roar is over." Second finales, in G & S, are usually inorganic reprises of the salient melodies; it is the ends of the first acts, in these operettas, that receive the most tender care of author and composer. The excision of the song is less easy to understand, as it has a graceful line and an original rhythm, and is not much like any other tune in the piece.

The Overture has been specially arranged by Mr. Geoffrey Toye, who also did the splendid arrangement of the *Pirates* Overture in the present series. Of course there was a stir about this in London town, where many G & S "fans" have yet to learn that Sullivan was in the habit of leaving the overtures to the last moment, and then entrusting them to the practised hand of his conductor, Alfred Cellier. Mr. Toye has acquitted himself very well indeed. It is doubtful whether Sullivan, excepting *Iolanthe* and *The Yeomen of the Guard*, had any but a supervisory association with the actual writing of the other overtures, which were, moreover, chiefly in the nature of potpourris.

Ruddigore, too little known on this side of the Atlantic, stands out for many little touches that are not usually connected with the series of the Savoy, especially the grim humor of the scene in which the portraits come to life. The madrigal of the year's seasons reveals Gilbert as poet rather than as tricky versifier, and prompts Sullivan to some of his sweetest music. The chorus-writing is often delightful, and as to the patter-song—

This particularly rapid, unintelligible patter
Isn't generally heard and if it is it doesn't matter

—it *was* generally heard indeed, and if it wasn't, it mattered tremendously to



W. S. G.! The new recording, indeed, has high audibility; Gilbert would have grunted his approval . . . One can't imagine any "fan" with the price doing without it.

ISAAC GOLDBERG

SULLIVAN
C-2607D
to
C-2612D

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD: *Abridged Version*.
(Gilbert-Sullivan) Twelve sides. Columbia Light Opera Company conducted by Joseph Batten. Six 10-inch discs. 75c each.

This is the second of the Columbia series of abridged versions of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The first set, issued last October, was the *Mikado*, and it was noticed on page 361 of the October issue. The most attractive feature of these sets, of course, is the price, which is sufficiently modest as to allow Gilbert and Sullivan fans unable to meet the stiff price asked for the admirable D'Oyly Carte albums nevertheless to have Gilbert and Sullivan recordings in their libraries. The *Mikado* set, though well recorded, was pretty poor, chiefly because of the indifferent rendition. In this set, given by the same performers, considerable improvement is noticeable. The cast does not try to over-do things, and the laborious straining to obtain effects is not nearly so apparent as it was in the *Mikado*. There is more ease and assurance, and in consequence the whole thing comes off very pleasantly. In the *Mikado* set a piano was substituted for the orchestra in several of the records, but here the small but lively orchestra conducted by Joseph Batten plays throughout the set. The principals are not extraordinary, but they are for the most part adequate, and the chorus is excellent. The recording is clear and good. If you cannot afford the complete version of the *Yeomen of the Guard* made by the D'Oyly Carte people, this set will do very nicely.

PUCCINI
BIZET
C-G9050M

MADAM BUTTERFLY: *Eines Tages sehen wir*. (Puccini)
One side and
CARMEN: *Ich sprach, dass ich furchtlos mich fühle*. (Bizet)
One side. Elisabeth Rethberg (Soprano) with orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

WAGNER
C-G4063M

TANNHÄUSER: (a) *Dich teure Halle*. (b) *Gebet der Elisabeth*. Two sides. Lotte Lehmann (Soprano) with orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Apparently the day of hackneyed operatic arias on records is not yet quite over. Puccini and Bizet in German seem a little incongruous, but Elisabeth Rethberg sings the two familiar arias with such unflinching charm and such impeccable taste that one tends to forget the language in which she is singing. The record, repressed from the Parlophone list, is the first by this artist to be issued under the Columbia label . . . The *Tannhäuser* pieces are not exactly novelties. Lotte Lehmann sings them beautifully, and she is capably supported by an orchestra under Dr. Weissmann, who also supplies the accompaniments for the Puccini and Bizet numbers. The recording in both records is thoroughly satisfactory.

WAGNER
V-DB1578
to
V-DB1583
IMPORTED

SIEGFRIED: *Selections from Acts 1 and 2.* Twelve sides.
Lauritz Melchior (Tenor), Heinrich Tessmer (Tenor), Eduard
Habich (Baritone), Friedrich Schorr (Baritone), with London
Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Heger.
Six 12-inch discs in album. \$12.



This makes H.M.V.'s third major whack at *Siegfried*, not to mention one or two minor onslaughts. In consequence, we are slowly but steadily progressing to the point where a fairly complete performance of the music drama may be had from records. A little over a year ago Victor combined the ten best records from the two H.M.V. albums, eliminated the duplications, and issued the result as album set M-83. A review of this set can be found on page 421 of the December, 1930, issue of *Disques*. Briefly summarized, the contents of that album include the Forging Song, the material from the second act that, in the concert hall, is known as the Forest Murmurs, and a major portion of the third act.

It is gratifying to note that none of these new discs duplicates any of the material covered in the previously released records. This is a matter for general rejoicing, for only too often the companies, after recording a portion of the *Ring*, continue for some years re-recording the portion, overlooking entirely the wide stretches of unrecorded material. The first of these records begins shortly before the rise of the curtain. We then have some thirty-two pages of the Mime-Siegfried scene recorded complete. The first cut occurs at page 36 of the Schott vocal score. Mime's explanation of Siegfried's birth and Sieglinde's death is missing; the cut continues to Siegfried's *Soll ich der Kunde glauben* on page 42. Beginning here, the music continues to the end of the scene. The sixth record face gives us the arrival of the Wanderer and continues, with cuts, down to the bottom of page 64. The last two records are from the second act; they begin with Alberich's first words and continue, with minor cuts, to the entrance of Mime and Siegfried. The first side of the last record begins on page 185 and takes in Siegfried's encounter with Fafner, ending with the death of the latter on page 194. The material from the bottom of page 190 to the top of 194 is omitted. The final side gives us the Mime-Alberich debate, beginning on 198 and ending on 208. These records can be fitted in the Victor *Siegfried* set very easily, and by combining the two sets one has sixteen records from the music drama.

Coming to the matter of the recording and interpretation, one finds it impossible to refrain from the use of superlatives. It would be a difficult task to assemble a more competent cast than H.M.V. has engaged for these records. The Mime, Heinrich Tessmer, is first-rate. To convey Mime's craftiness and slyness on the stage and to do so by means of the phonograph are two entirely different things; to accomplish the latter convincingly calls for talents of a high order. Albert Reiss, who sang the rôle in the Victor set, did the job satisfactorily, but after hearing Tessmer there is little doubt of the latter's superiority. Tessmer's Mime, indeed, has been highly praised by that final authority on Wagner, Ernest Newman. Eduard Habich as Alberich is excellent, too. As for Melchior and Schorr, there is no need to speak of them at any length. Both of these fine singers have already made many superb Wagnerian records, and it is only necessary to say that they have never given us better work than in this set. Robert Heger,



who conducts the London Symphony here, will be remembered for the three record sides he conducted in the Victor *Siegfried* album—three of the finest sides in that set, incidentally. It is obvious, after hearing these records, that as a Wagnerian conductor he ranks with Coates and Blech. The orchestra is always capable and responsive. Finally, the recording is probably the finest we have yet had in Wagnerian records. The clarity and balance are remarkable throughout, so that the wealth of detail with which Wagner's score abounds is admirably displayed. No owner of the Victor *Siegfried* set can very well get along without adding these six records to his collection.



VOCAL

BRAHMS
B-85008

{ MINNELIED, Op. 71, No. 5. One side and
STÄNDCHEN, Op. 106, No. 1. One side. Heinrich Schlusnus
(Baritone) with piano accompaniment by Franz Rupp.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

WOLF
B-85010

{ AN DIE GELIEBTE. One side and
DASS DOCH GEMALT ALL' DEINE REIZE WÄREN.
One side. Heinrich Schlusnus (Baritone) with piano accom-
paniment by Franz Rupp. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

The two Brahms songs, now repressed by Brunswick, were briefly noticed on page 511 of the January issue, when the imported Polydor pressing arrived. It is in all respects a fine record. Now that the Hugo Wolf Society has succeeded in obtaining the needed subscribers, perhaps some attention will be drawn to the works of this neglected composer. He has not been altogether ignored by the recording companies, and Polydor in particular has given us some worthy records of his songs. Here are two lovely examples. The first, *An die Geliebte*, is set to a text by Möricke, and the second, *Dass doch gemalt all' deine Reize wären*, to one by Paul Heyse. Both songs are notable for their power and depth of feeling, and Schlusnus sings them exquisitely. Franz Rupp provides excellent piano accompaniments, which are recorded with fine realism. The singer is somewhat too powerfully recorded, so that the volume will require regulating.

**MOUSSORG-
SKY
SIEROFF**
V-DB1511
IMPORTED

{ TRÈPAK (*Songs and Dances of Death*). (Moussorgsky) One
side and
MERRY BUTTERWEEK. (Sieroff) One side. Theodore
Chaliapine (Bass) with Russian Opera Chorus and orchestra.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Chaliapine records haven't been very numerous in the past year or so. This is a superlative example of his singing at its best, and since the music and recording are good, those who collect his records need no further information.

SCHUBERT
C-G9051M

AM MEER. One side and
DER WANDERER. One side. Richard Tauber (Tenor) with
orchestra conducted by Ernst Hauke. One 12-inch disc. \$2.



SCHUBERT
WOLF
C-G4064M

UNGEDULD. (Schubert) One side and
HEIMWEH. (Wolf) One side. Richard Tauber (Tenor) with
orchestra conducted by Ernst Hauke. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

These discs will appeal more strongly to Tauber's admirers than they will to lovers of the songs of Schubert and Wolf. Finer recordings of these songs are elsewhere available, and the heavy orchestral accompaniments with which Tauber is provided are most unwelcome, adding nothing whatever to the effectiveness of the songs and spoiling the dignity and eloquence which they possess when properly rendered. The attractive qualities of Tauber's voice, however, are not to be sniffed at—only they are more fittingly displayed in music of a lighter character than that which he essays here. Singing operetta nightly, as Tauber frequently does, is not conducive to good lieder singing—with unnecessary orchestral accompaniments.

HANDEL
C-DX295
IMPORTED

JEPHTHA: (a) *Deeper and Deeper Still*. (b) *Waft Her, Angels*. Two sides. Heddle Nash (Tenor) with orchestra.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

FRANCK
GOUNOD
C-DF662
IMPORTED

AVE MARIA: *Chant liturgique*. (Franck) One side and
LE CIEL A VISITÉ LA TERRE. (Gounod) One side. Alice
Plato (Mezzo-Soprano) with piano accompaniment by Fernand
Goeyens. One 10-inch disc. \$1.

The Handel record is a notably fine one. The recitative, *Deeper and Deeper Still*, and the aria, *Waft Her, Angels*, are full of dramatic power and dignity and are representative of Handel at his best. Heddle Nash sings them robustly, and he is admirably supported by an orchestra. The recording is excellent . . . The Franck and Gounod pieces, after the Handel, seem pale and sickly. Neither has much to recommend it. The rendition in each case is only fair.

MOZART
V-1556

DAS VEILCHEN. One side and
SEHNSUCHT NACH DEM FRÜHLING. One side. Sigrid
Onegin (Contralto) with piano accompaniment by Franz Rupp.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Mozart's achievements in the field of lieder writing were by no means so impressive as his contributions to other forms of music. He wrote comparatively few songs, and these at wide intervals. Of *Das Veilchen*, Grove's says: "But the finest of Mozart's Lieder is undoubtedly the exquisite setting of Goethe's *Das Veilchen*, which shows what he might have accomplished if he had devoted himself more seriously to this form." Jahn is equally laudatory. "But the crown of all the songs, by virtue of its touching expression of emotion and its charming perfection of form," he says, "is unquestionably Goethe's *Veilchen* (K. 476) . . . here we have

New Victor Releases

MUSICAL MASTERPIECE SERIES

Études Symphoniques (Schumann). Played by Alfred Cortot on three double-faced 12-inch Victor Records, Nos. 7493-7495 . . . in automatic sequence, Nos. 7496-7498. In Album M-122 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

During the current year concert programs of several first magnitude pianists have contained the Schumann Symphonic Studies . . . so that the release of this entertaining work played by Alfred Cortot will be most welcome to lovers of piano music. It is written in the style of theme and variations which are presented in diversification so striking as to hold the listeners' interest throughout. Cortot's playing is brilliant . . . his interpretation appealing. As an addition to your record collection . . . an example of the Romantic School in music, this Album cannot be recommended too highly.

Symphony No. 4 in A Major opus 90 (Mendelssohn). Performed by La Scala Orchestra of Milan, conducted by Ettore Panizza, on four double-faced 12-inch Victor Records, Nos. 11170-11173 . . . in automatic sequence Nos. 11174-11177. In Album M-119 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

The joyous quality of Mendelssohn's music is well represented by this recording of his Symphony No. 4 in A Major—popularly known as the "Italian," which has been recorded appropriately by an Italian orchestra. The graceful melodies are unusually appealing . . . with a charm that is lasting.

RED SEAL RECORDS

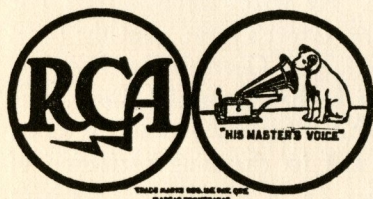
1812 Overture (Tchaikowsky). Played by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on Victor Records 7499-7500. List price, \$2.00 each.

Komm Süsser Tod (J. S. Bach) and *Minuetto* (Haydn). Played, with piano accompaniment, by Pablo Casals on Victor Record 7501. List price, \$2.00.

Das Veilchen (The Violet) (Mozart) and

Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling (Longing for Spring) (Mozart). Sung, with piano accompaniment, by Mme. Sigrid Onegin on Victor Record 1556. List price, \$1.50.

Schwanda (Weinberger). Polka and Furiant. Played by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Leo Blech on Victor Record 4198. List price, \$1.00.



R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey

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the impression made upon Mozart by true poetry. It may seem remarkable that so simple a lyrical poem should have been treated by Mozart as a romance, giving a certain amount of dramatic detail to the little story . . . A tendency to dramatic effect was inherent in Mozart's nature as an artist, and Goethe's clear and plastic presentation of a simple image, true in every detail, could not fail to impress him deeply." *Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling* is in a gayer and more sportive mood. Both pieces are apparently here recorded for the first time. Sigrid Onegin sings them beautifully, and the always capable Franz Rupp provides his usual tasteful and appropriate accompaniments. The recording is excellent.



**MEYER-
HELMUND
PRESSEL**
C-G9052M

WHISPERING IN THE DANCE: *Waltz-Intermezzo*.
(Meyer-Helmund) One side and
ON THE WESER. (Pressel) One side. Richard Tauber
(Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Ernst Hauke.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

These pieces are nicely adapted to Tauber's voice. *Whispering in the Dance* is a pleasant waltz with an engaging swing, while *On the Weser* is more sentimental and, incidentally, less pleasing. Both are well sung and recorded.

LABIS
V-D1996
IMPORTED

LE POT-POURRI D'ALAIN GERBAULT. (Arr. Labis)
Two sides. Yvonne Printemps (Soprano) and orchestra con-
ducted by Raoul Labis. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Yvonne Printemps, who sang so delightfully in the Guitry-Printemps album issued a year or so ago by Victor, renders on this disc a tuneful potpourri of more or less familiar numbers. In that album her work was more attractive than it is here, but it is an entertaining record and displays her charming voice to excellent advantage.

VIOLIN



BARTÓK
C-50318D

HUNGARIAN FOLK TUNES. (Bartók-Szigeti) Two sides.
Joseph Szigeti (Violin) and Bela Bartók (Piano).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

Columbia's lists are nearly always fertile hunting grounds for the bargain seekers, and this month an exceptionally fine one can be found in this record. The names of Bela Bartók and Joseph Szigeti are both formidable ones in modern music—the former in the field of composition and the latter in that of interpretation. Szigeti, indeed, is perhaps the finest fiddler we have today, as some of his records afford ample testimony. Well over a year ago Columbia put out a little 10-inch disc setting forth some *Roumanian Folk Dances*, which, like these *Hungarian Folk Tunes*, were among the results of Bartók's indefatigable researches into Hungarian, Roumanian and Slovak folk music. Both that disc and the one listed above—this latter from the imported pressings—were noticed on page 375 of the November, 1930, *Disques*. The tunes themselves are bright and dashing and full of gusto. Szigeti, capably supported by Bartók, plays them admirably, and the recording is very good.



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF

A P R I L

Album No. 35 90217 to 90221 incl.	{ BRAHMS—SYMPHONY NO. 2 - D MAJOR - Op. 73 Five Records THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN MAX FIEDLER, Conductor PIANO TRIO—C MAJOR, Op. 87, 3rd Movement (Scherzo) BERNER TRIO (Hier-Brun-Lehr)	} Recorded in Europe PRICE \$7.50 Complete with Album
85008	{ HUGO WOLF—DAS DOCH GEMALT ALL' DEINE REIZE WÄREN (I Wish All Your Charm Was Painted) AN DIE GELIEBTE (To the Beloved One) Baritone Solos in German, HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS Piano accompaniment by FRANZ RUPP	} Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.25

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VIOLONCELLO



**HAYDN
BACH**
V-7501

MINUETTO. (Haydn) One side and
KOMM SÜSSER TOD. (Bach) One side. Pablo Casals
(Cello) with piano accompaniment by Blas-Net.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

**MOUSSORG-
SKY
BOULANGER**
C-2616D

GOPAK: *Dance of Little Russia*. (Moussorgsky) One side and
PIECE IN C SHARP MINOR (No. 3). (Boulanger) One
side. Maurice Maréchal (Cello) with piano accompaniment.
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

These are admirable 'cello records. The deep, rich tones of this instrument give the familiar *Komm Süsser Tod* an extremely impressive quality, and Casals plays the piece magnificently and in the best of taste. The Haydn *Minuetto*, on the reverse side, is stately and charming, and it is played with great dexterity. The recording and accompaniments are more than good, making the disc a desirable one for those who like the 'cello . . . The Maréchal disc offers music of a somewhat different character. The Moussorgsky *Gopak*, which he used in his opera, *The Fair at Sorochinsky*, is deftly tossed off, and so is the Boulanger piece.

MISCELLANEOUS



V-W1166
to
V-W1170
IMPORTED

PAGES CHOISIES PAR SACHA GUITRY. Sacha Guitry.
Five 12-inch discs in album. \$10.

Sacha Guitry's talents are already widely known, and the release a year or so ago by Victor of the Guitry-Printemps album greatly increased his audience. Here he gives a series of readings of famous authors, together with a preface by himself. The authors included are: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Octave Mirbeau, Ernest Renan, Anatole France, G. de Porto-Riche, Maurice Maeterlinck, Georges Courteline and Jules Renard. A fly-leaf in the album contains portraits of these men, and a note by Anatole France. Those who understand the French language will find Guitry's flawless enunciation an unfailing delight.

**CODEFROID
DE SEVERAC
POENITZ**
V-EH579
IMPORTED

ETUDE DE CONCERT. (Felix Godefroid) One side and
(a) VALSE ROMANTIQUE. (De Severac) (b) DIE SPIEL-
DOSE, Op. 29, No. 2. (Poenitz) Mildred Dilling (Harp).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Gracefully played, these attractive numbers enjoy here an excellent recording. The harp reproduces very well, and the paucity of harp records gives the disc an additional value.

—New Issues—
Columbia
Masterworks*

MOZART: CONCERTO IN F MAJOR (K. 459) FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA.

Mozart, generally acknowledged to be the creator of the concerto in its modern form, wrote few concertos more spontaneous and delightful than the F Major for Piano. It was written in 1784 and performed among others in 1790 at the coronation of Leopold II of Austria, in Frankfort. It is in three movements, the first an allegro full of the simple joy of living, the second the customary slow movement, tranquilly melodious and beautiful; the finale is again an allegro dashing and gay. Georges Boskoff, who plays the solo part, is one of the eminent European pianists, of Roumanian birth and French education. He is also well known as a composer and transcriber of the organ works of J. S. Bach.



Masterworks Set No. 170

Mozart: *Concerto in F Major (K. 459) for Piano and Orchestra. Georges Boskoff and Paris Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by G. Cloëz. In Six Parts, on Three Twelve-Inch Records. \$4.50 with Album.*

GRIEG: TWO ELEGIAC MELODIES, FOR STRING ORCHESTRA, OP. 34. These two exquisite melodies for string orchestra are typical both of Grieg and of the North. They possess moreover a melancholy beauty which sets them apart among orchestral works. They are transcriptions by Grieg of two of his own most poignantly effective songs, *The Wounded Heart* and *Springtide*. The music is eloquently explanatory of the emotions animating the verses of the original songs. Mengelberg and his great orchestra have given them the restrained but intense reading which brings their beauties into vivid glow.

Grieg: *Two Elegiac Melodies, for String Orchestra, Op. 34. No. 1: Herzenwunden (Heartaches) No. 2: Letzter Frühling (The Last Spring). Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. On One Twelve-Inch Record, No. 68024-D. \$2.00.*

SCHUMANN: KINDERSCENEN (SCENES FROM CHILDHOOD) OP. 15, FOR PIANO. The thirteen little pieces in the Scenes from Childhood are among the most delightful in the long catalogue of Schumann's piano works, and ever since their first publication have been prime favorites with both the concert pianist and the public. Simple as they seem to be, they call none the less for the highest artistic finish in execution. They run the gamut of childhood emotions and activities from dreamy pensiveness to a riotous game of tag. The celebrated Träumerei is a part of this composition.

Yves Nat, who appears for the first time in our list, is one of the most highly considered of the younger generation of French pianists. In 1906 he was laureate of Diemer's piano class at the Paris Conservatory and has been for a score of years prominent as composer and concert artist in the French capital. He gives a delicate and unaffected reading of these charming numbers.

Schumann: *Kinderscenen (Scenes from Childhood) Op. 15, for Piano. Yves Nat. In Four Parts, on Two Ten-Inch Records, Nos. 17024-D to 17025-D. Each, \$1.00.*



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CORRESPONDENCE



Lieder Records Neglected

Editor, *Disques*:

About four years ago I found Peter Hugh Reed's newly started "Better Records" column in *Musical America*. In those days I waited expectantly for the release of such things as *Estrellita* and *Valse Bluette* (played by Heifetz), and I watched the review column eagerly to see what encomiums of praise that record would get. I was sadly disappointed at the three cool lines allowed.

I had supposed that I had progressed to finer and better desires since 1928 (in no small part due to that same column), but I sometimes wonder whether I am still on the wrong track. For I have watched just as eagerly for reviews of the very, very infrequent lieder releases, and I am just as sadly disappointed at the few lines (or no lines at all) which are spared such records. Specifically, I have watched the New York *Times*, *Musical Courier*, and *Outlook* columns in vain for even a mention of Schorr's recent *Am Meer* and *Wanderleid*. *Disques* did give it a little more space than usual, but did not deign to make the most obvious comparisons, *i. e.*, with Schlusnus' and Kipnis' *Am Meer*, and with the latter's *Wanderleid*.

Perhaps I am unjust, but I should say that one could count on the fingers of one hand the adequate reviews of serious songs that have appeared in *Disques*—and even so there has been nothing to compare with the page given Brahms' *Alto Rhapsodie* (an entirely justified page, which helped determine me to get the records before ever I knew a note of the music), nor that would be at all proportionate to the reams of space devoted to orchestral records (good or bad, great or trivial—a whole page to Toscanini conducting the overture to the *Barber of Seville*, for example).

Furthermore, *Disques* has ignored some of the very finest foreign releases of lieder in 1930 and 1931. I mention only three Brahms discs by Gerhardt, and one by Olszewska, and a Wolf disc by McCormack. The specious argument that *Disques* is an American magazine for American records is answered by a glance at the relative numbers of domestic and foreign records reviewed. More than a

few of the latter offer very little in the way of solid musical fare, and (with the tripe constituting most of the domestic vocal releases) could be dismissed with about one line of appropriate rating per half dozen records, and the saved space filled with at least one good vocal review each month.

Am I on the wrong track? Are the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, Strauss, and others here and there—are they really undeserving of loving study and enthusiastic appreciation? Are only symphonies and overtures, concertos and quartets, plain song and opera, worthy of the attention of the real music lover?

Or is the art song being shamefully neglected, and that not least by those who should be leading the public taste? In the December *Disques* rather sharp editorial criticism was directed against the lack of support of the Wolf Society. Has *Disques* done anything to foster and stimulate interest in the sort of music which the Wolf Society offers?

That I may not be labelled as a mere crank on lieder, I close by saying that I have extreme pleasure in the great symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms; that Bach is an eternal joy—among my Bach records is a set of one of the sonatas for violin unaccompanied, surely no after-dinner mint; that Wagner has pretty nearly blinded me to the operas of lesser men; that I want all the Gilbert and Sullivans; that I love chamber music. But I am buying the Schorr *Am Meer* to put with my Duhan *Am Meer* before anything else. So I guess I am a crank after all.

RALPH W. SNYDER

Indianapolis, Ind.

"Wizard's Music"

Editor, *Disques*:

Robert Donaldson Darrell, writing in your March number on Edison, makes an unusually comprehensive and keenly analytical summation of the late Wizard's career in the field of recorded music, though in a vein which, when considered with some of his other writings,—notably on Chopin,—will yet earn him distinction as an adroit disparager. Had Mr. Edison been as adept at self-advertising as he was at the origination of ideas

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Correspondence (Continued)

and the organization of forces to bring about their materilization, his life might have been attended by a vaster measure of cheap popularity, but it is doubtful whether his actual accomplishments would have been as extensive.

Nobody cares whether the phonograph record of today is or is not fundamentally the same as Edison's. Berliner, Scott, and others took their places along with Edison in a *common* endeavor, and today's record bears the impresses of *all* of their efforts. The claims to priority in the art of electrical recording are numerous, but Marsh Laboratories of Chicago seem to consider themselves the real originators of the process. One thing is certain, and that is that Edison's comprehension of the controlling principles of record making record on solid rock. Take note that one of the most famous acoustic laboratories in the world is now hard at work on a vertically cut (hill-and-dale) record, playable with a diamond-tipped stylus! Surface sounds, says a prominent American composer, are practically inaudible even when greatly amplified.

I own one of Edison's "Laboratory Model" machines, and I play it even today for sheer pleasure. It is the only machine in my studio that isn't chronically out of order. I wish my electrical machines were one-tenth as free of trouble.

As to voice quality, the old records possess an astonishingly satisfying characteristic. There is no "wiriness," and the old piano records have no "grounded" effect.

Edison's boast of sensitiveness to overtones is borne out by the amazingly uniform success of former Edison recording artists before the modern radio microphone. Edison certainly could recognize "microphone" voices! His own observations on dissonances, et cetera, have been echoed at various times by more musical people; most recently, indeed, by Sergei Rachmaninoff. His comments on America's musical appetite are corroborated in full in view of the character of the radioed pabulum it so greedily devours.

Edison was nobody's fool. He was practical in the extreme, and neither he, nor those close to him, could see any sense in trying to give the public anything but what it wanted. Surely that was democratic; and the last balance sheet of Edison Industries to come

to my notice showed how sound was the Edison policy of tackling nothing but sure things and quickly dropping the unpromising. The debts were negligible, the assets solid, and as for cash—positively pediculous!

Anyway, it is doubtful that Edison "endeavored *frantically* to perfect an electrically recorded 're-creation' that could cope with the brilliance and volume" of other types of records named by Mr. Darrell. The "Edisonic" model with the heavy reproducer and the 10,000, 11,000 and 12,000 series of matrices—all acoustic—had loads of volume and a good bass. And don't think that the acoustic process always eliminated the deep notes. I have heard ancient Cort records that sounded almost like electrics. Later came the 18,000 matrices and these were electric, and whoever heard these vertically on the twin-speaker Edison radio-phonograph will never forget it!

The "spiritual food" Mr. Darrell thinks Edison should have provided was, indeed, not forthcoming. But those who impoverish themselves to uplift others end up with "crucification." Edison was not that kind, and therein lay the heartbreak for us of the spiritual hunger and marasmatic purse.

CHAD WALSH

Marion, Va.

Recording Suggestions

Editor, *Disques*:

. . . If you can spare the space, I believe a boost would be appreciated by many in behalf of recordings of these notable compositions: *The Divine Poem* of Scriabin; the No. 4 symphony of Glazounow; and Schrecker's *Birthday of the Infanta*.^{*} If the recording companies are not too greatly concerned in duplicating or triplicating old releases, they might profitably turn their thoughts again to Richard Strauss. After all, compositions as worthy as the *Sinfonica Domestica*, the *Alpine Symphony* and *Don Quixote* should be preserved for posterity! Deems Taylor's *Through the Looking Glass* and his *King's Henchmen* have been strangely neglected, too, in my opinion.

LOUIS DE S. FULLER

Hollywood, Calif.

^{*} The Schrecker work has been recorded by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under the direction of the composer himself on three 12-inch Polydor records (Nos. PD-66549 to PD-66551).—Ed.

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NEW MUSIC

SONATA NO. 2 for Piano, Op. 13. By L. Polowinkin. New York: *Associated Music Publishers (Universal Edition)*. \$2.50.

SONATA NO. 3 for Piano, Op. 15. By L. Polowinkin. New York: *Associated Music Publishers (Universal Edition)*. \$2.50.

RHAPSODY for Piano. By L. Polowinkin. New York: *Associated Music Publishers (Universal Edition)*. \$1.30.

Polowinkin is one of the few composers of the youngest Russian group who has something to say and says it in his own original manner. The same thing could be said about him as about his great countryman, Nicolai Medtner: that he is a "composer for musicians." His music is of such an intimate quality, despite its clear-cut, melodious character, that few listeners are able to follow with ease the intricate contrapuntal web of the voices or the different transformations of the themes of these two sonatas. Like Medtner, who created the *Fairy Tales*, which form is so congenial to him, Polowinkin has also written a number of short pieces under the generic title *Events*. However, the analogy ends right here, for, unlike Medtner, Polowinkin is thoroughly imbued with the modern spirit and does not shun the use of polytonal and other forms of extreme dissonance whenever it suits his purpose. The two sonatas are alike in form, both having slow middle movements, with the other two movements in rapid tempi with lively themes and a sinuous, restless bass. The brooding melancholy which is usually associated with Russian works is conspicuous by its absence. The two movements of the Rhapsody are entitled (1) *Auprès du brasier*, and (2) *Se promenant jusque l'aube*. The first naturally is in the nature of a nocturne, and the second is a wild outburst of joy.

SONATA NO. 2 for Piano, Op. 59. By Ernst Krenek. New York: *Associated Music Publishers (Universal Edition)*. \$1.50.

This latest opus of Krenek is very interesting as showing the progress the composer has made since the publication of his very early First Sonata in E Flat Major, Op. 2. The music is more compact, concentrated; the themes are not over-elaborated and the polyphony is not so thick as in the earlier

number. Krenek follows very closely the old sonata form of Mozart and Haydn, even going so far as to place a repetition sign at the end of the exposition section of the first movement; but instead of being a minuet or scherzo, the second movement has the characteristics of an American rag-time piece. The third movement is a lively little rondo which effectively concludes the sonata. There is a fine sonority and clearness of melodic line in this work which ought to make it a grateful number for concert performance, especially since the movements are rather short and easy to follow.

"LITTLE" ORGAN FUGUE in G Minor. By J. S. Bach. Adapted for piano by Olga Samaroff. Philadelphia: *Elkan-Vogel Co.* 60c.

This delightful fugue, in which Bach used as a subject one of his most beautiful melodies, is almost as effective on the piano as on the organ. It is of medium difficulty, and the adaptation by Olga Samaroff is not much different from the original organ score. It will make a fine addition to the pianist's repertory.

LEGENDE for Piano and Violin. By Boris Koutzen. Philadelphia: *Elkan-Vogel Co.* 80c.

NOCTURNE for Piano and Violin. By Boris Koutzen. Philadelphia: *Elkan-Vogel Co.* 50c.

The Legende was composed in 1926 and dedicated to Fritz Kreisler. It is written in the approved Russian fashion with the piano introducing a gloomy four-measure melody in C minor, after which the violin takes up a different theme in swifter tempo, and then both are combined together and are played simultaneously by both instruments till a new broad lyric theme in C major makes its appearance. After modulating back to C minor the previous material is recapitulated in a new manner . . . The Nocturne was written in 1930 and is in modern idiom. The dreamy atmospheric character of the piece fully justifies its title. Mr. Koutzen, who is well known as a violinist and composer in Philadelphia, knows how to write effectively for his instrument. Violinists who are looking for new material will find them valuable.

MAURICE B. KATZ

BOOKS

STRAUSS'S TONE-POEMS. By Thomas Armstrong. New York: *Carl Fischer, Inc.* 75c.

ELGAR: *Instrumental Works*. By F. H. Shera. New York: *Carl Fischer, Inc.* 75c.

These are excellent additions to the Musical Pilgrim series, edited by Sir Arthur Somervell for the Oxford University Press. Mr. Armstrong's book, of course, covers no new material, for Strauss still figures conspicuously on symphony orchestra programs, and though we are constantly assured that his day is over, nevertheless *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Ein Heldenleben* continue to be irreplaceable features during every orchestral season. The average concert-goer is thus pretty well acquainted with these works of Strauss, so that Mr. Armstrong's comments will commend themselves chiefly because of their directness and simplicity.

"To analyse the tone-poems of Strauss is no easy matter," he says at the beginning of his foreword. "It would be easy to discuss them either on purely musical lines, or on purely literary ones: the difficulty is to combine the two in such a way as best to help the student. Strauss has amply, too amply, explained them himself. Meanings, sometimes very fanciful, even contradictory, are attached to almost every phrase: and though it may be well to disregard these meanings ultimately, it is necessary to know them first. Most of Strauss's own labels have been incorporated here, therefore, even when I should myself prefer to pass over them. In practice, once the works are really well known, it is best to pay no conscious attention to them. A good performance swings the story along to a climax: details fall into place. The full cumulative effect cannot be got, however, as in a Bach choral prelude, unless the implications are instinctively recognized. This demands study before a performance: reference to a programme during performance is fatal."

Mr. Armstrong's succinct and revealing descriptions of the various tone-poems are put into plain, simple English, the meaning of which is never in doubt. In addition to *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Ein Heldenleben*, he also discusses *Tod und Verklärung*

and *Don Quixote*. With the exception of the last named, all of these works have been recorded.

The Elgar study will perhaps be more valuable than the Strauss to the average American concert-goer. Elgar, as is well known, is not very popular in this country. Save for the *Enigma* Variations, one or two of the *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches, and the ubiquitous *Salut d'amour*, he is scarcely ever heard of over here. The two symphonies are almost entirely neglected, so that the only way to hear them in America is by means of the phonograph.

"No other composer . . . has more accurately voiced in music the thoughts of so large a number of his fellow-countrymen at different epochs," says Mr. Shera. "This may be a virtue or a vice, but the fact is beyond dispute." Mr. Shera is equally cautious when he comes to the question of Elgar's proper place in the modern musical world, and in fact he slides by the matter with the usual helpful comment: "Whether or no Elgar will rank with the greatest composers of all time it is futile to prophesy: we are still too near for a true perspective."

But when the author tackles the works themselves he is far more rewarding. Those selected for analysis are the Variations for Orchestra, Op. 36, the two symphonies and the Violin Concerto. All of these compositions have been recorded, so that the music lover anxious to know Elgar more intimately can do so with comparative ease.

MUSIC AND THE CHILD. Edited by Doris S. Champlin. New York: *Child Study Association of America*. 50c.

Parents should find this attractively gotten up booklet of considerable value. It contains brief articles on "The Rôle of the Parent in Music Education," by Emanuel Elston; "The Singing Child," by Marion Flagg; "The Significance of Dancing," by Mary P. O'Donnell; "Simple and Primitive Instruments," by Doris S. Champlin; and "Learning to Listen," by Rose Jockwig. Especially useful are the lists of books, phonograph records and piano rolls.

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